

# the johns hopkins NEWS-LETTER

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COURTESY OF CALVIN QIAN

Clockwise from top left: junior JoJo Castellanos, senior Daniela Barrio and junior Yash Jain shared their personal stories on Wednesday evening.

## Republican tax bill worries grad students

By VALERIE CHAVEZ  
Senior Staff Writer

Earlier this month, Republicans in the House of Representatives passed a tax reform bill. This bill is intended to provide tax cuts for both corporations and individuals. It also includes a provision that would repeal current tax exemptions on graduate students' tuition waivers.

Currently, the Senate version of the bill does not contain this provision. However, if the bill passes, it would impact students who receive tuition waivers from working at the University, usually as researchers or teaching assistants. Fellowships or scholarships will not be counted as taxable income.

The new provision will not be put into effect for graduate students at the School of Medicine, as their tuition waivers are not tied to employment. However, the provision will impact most graduate students in other divisions of the University like the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering.

Peter Weck, a second year physics PhD student at Hopkins, said that were

this tax plan to go through, he would have to seriously consider dropping out of his program.

"Based on the numbers I've seen in the physics department, we'd be making less than a minimum wage full-time job. Minimum wage doesn't mean a livable wage," Weck said.

"We'd be making less than a minimum wage full-time job."

— PETER WECK,  
PHYSICS PhD STUDENT

He was disappointed with the University's response to the graduate students' concerns. For him, initial correspondence with the University came through a series of emails forwarded from the administration to the physics department.

Weck wished that the University had been more proactive. He would also like to see Hopkins state more concrete plans and take a stronger stance against the bill.

"I'm still hoping that they will follow up with something more — more of a stand, something loud and public to tell us that they are behind us instead of an 'after the fact, we are paying attention to this,'" Weck said.

Ashley Grant, a PhD student at the School of Education, is also worried that the plan will make it difficult for her to complete her program.

SEE GRADUATE, PAGE A4

## Students urge peers to empower others at TEDxJHU

By KATY WILNER  
For The News-Letter

TEDxJHU hosted its fall speaker series titled "Note to Self" on Wednesday evening in the Levering Great Hall. The event featured senior Daniela Barrio, junior Yash Jain and junior JoJo Castellanos, three students who gave TED-style talks.

This event was orga-

nized by the University's TEDxJHU, a privately licensed branch of the non-profit TED.

Lauren Duan, the logistics specialist for TEDxJHU, explained the significance of this year's theme.

"All three speakers talked about their experiences and how they could apply [them]," she said. "Using the theme 'Note to Self' by kind

of writing a note to themselves, we as an audience can use those experiences to guide our actions."

The speakers each honed in on a topic that has directly affected them, including mental health awareness, acknowledging privilege and finding the courage to speak out against sexual violence.

The night kicked off with senior Daniela Barrio discussing her personal experiences with mental health. She said that after her sister was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, she developed an understanding of the barriers to helping those struggling with their mental health.

"My goal is to give you a different perspective on mental health, normalize the barriers of giving help and, ultimately, leave you feeling more confident when it comes to giving help to people in need," Barrio said.

She spoke about how she knew others struggling with mental health such as an ex-boyfriend and her best friend. Barrio spoke about how these experiences taught her how to care for others.

"Something that everyone here can do is educate themselves on their loved ones," she said. "You can provide the best and most holistic advice the more

SEE TEDx, PAGE A4

## Nonprofit brings creative writing to City students



COURTESY OF PATRICE HUTTON

Writers in Baltimore Schools offers creative writing workshops to city students.

By JACQUI NEBER  
Opinions Editor

For years, Baltimore City Public Schools has faced unprecedented debt, overcrowded classrooms and faculty cuts that result in limited opportunities for students to explore the arts.

As city officials work to address these issues, the nonprofit Writers in Baltimore Schools (WBS) aims to expand students' creative writing and literacy skills within a school system currently struggling to provide those resources. Since its inception, WBS has worked with over 600 students.

### How WBS works

WBS has a program advisory board which counsels instructors and teaching fellows who work in Baltimore City Public Schools to develop curricula that will engage Baltimore's stu-

dents in the creative arts.

WBS draws its instructors from the Writing Seminars department, the University of Baltimore Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program and Morgan State University.

Hopkins undergraduates can work with WBS by taking the course "Fiction and Social Engagement," which will be offered this spring, or by volunteering at Baltimore schools on a weekly basis and leading workshops.

Last year, eight Hopkins students worked in schools as a part of WBS. Stephanie Haenn, a junior Writing Seminars major, has been volunteering with the program for the past year. She enjoys working in classrooms and appreciates that volunteering with WBS allows her to get off campus.

"I really just wanted to get out of the Hopkins bubble in a way that wasn't just

SEE WRITERS, PAGE A6

## How do undergraduates get their research published?

By JACOB TOOK  
News & Features Editor

Hopkins is considered to be the first research institution in the United States. The University stresses that research projects are accessible to undergraduates; however, many students feel that Hopkins could do more to help them pursue research and, ultimately, get published.

The University was founded in the late 19th century on the principle of integrating education and research, following the centuries-old model of Germany's Heidelberg

University.

Today, about two thirds of undergraduates engage in research, but they often find that publishing their results can be more difficult.

Some undergraduates also identified differences in pursuing and publishing research between humanities and STEM fields. The News-Letter spoke with three humanities and three STEM undergraduates to find out what challenges they face in getting published.

Mike Tritsch, a sophomore in the Near Eastern Studies department, researched bone remains

at a slave site in southern Maryland. He said that one of his supervisors helped him get a paper on his research accepted in a peer-reviewed journal because it is typically difficult for undergraduates to get published.

"Most journals are only grad students or PhDs," he said. "In other fields, you have a lab, and everyone who works on the project gets their name on the publication — archaeology is just one or two authors."

Senior Hannah Cowley, a cognitive science major, researched how the brain perceives space by working

with a young girl who is unable to differentiate between left and right.

She said that it can be difficult for undergraduates to find labs in which they can contribute to the research rather than only engaging with menial tasks.

"It's easy to get pigeonholed into washing beakers," she said. "If publication or contributing is your end goal, you have to work on not being complacent, which is hard because of the stress of Hopkins."

She added that it is difficult for undergraduates to contribute to research projects in the lab because they

SEE PUBLISHING, PAGE A5

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### A festive first Thanksgiving



Amelia Isaacs shares her first Thanksgiving experience in America as a student from London.  
**VOICES, PAGE A9**

### Baltimore's eeriest locations

Genevieve Thomas dares readers to visit locations in her list of the top four spookiest places in the city. **YOUR WEEKEND, PAGE B2**

### Lady Bird captivates audiences

Luis Curiel praises the independent film *Lady Bird* for successfully capturing a teenage girl's emotional maturation to adulthood.  
**ARTS, PAGE A3**

## NEWS &amp; FEATURES

# Gonzales explores issues immigrants face in U.S.

By ANNA GORDON  
For *The News-Letter*

The Inter-Asian Council (IAC) hosted Karen Gonzalez, the training and development manager for World Relief Immigration Clinic, a legal team that assists immigrants and their family members, on Monday.

Gonzalez spoke to Hopkins students about major issues facing refugees and immigrants in the United States.

She began the lecture by showing pictures of statues of human body parts. These statues were based in the French town of Marseille, which has a heavy immigrant community. Gonzalez believes these statues encapsulate an important part of the immigrant experience.

"All immigrants, no matter what, when they come here they do leave pieces of themselves. There's always a part of them missing," she said. "But then [when they come] back home after years and years, it doesn't feel like home either."

Additionally, Gonzalez said that people usually do not immigrate unless they are in desperate situations because it is difficult to restart life all over. She noted that this was a factor in her own family's decision to immigrate from Guatemala to America.

"We moved to the U.S. in the 1980s because there was a civil war in Guatemala funded by the U.S.," she said. "The same thing happened in El Salvador. So this created mass immigration."

According to Gonzalez, undocumented immigrants are also particularly vulnerable in the U.S. because they fear going to police and getting deported. Gonzalez said undocumented immigrants are more likely to be victims of crime, which is something that she deals with firsthand at the World Relief Immigration Clinic.

"I never thought I would work in a job where I would meet a woman every day who was sexually assaulted," she said.

Gonzalez told students that the legal process of immigrating to the U.S. can make people feel even more vulnerable. She gave an example of a green card holder who tried to fill out a voter registration form, thinking all those who received it could use it.

"Only U.S. citizens can do that," she said. "He [later] applied for citizenship and was denied because he had misrepresented himself as a U.S. citizen, and that is a federal crime. And then his green card was taken away and he was deported."

Gonzalez also noted that undocumented immigrants must obtain counterfeit social security cards in order to work in most places. She explained

that social security cards are printed on simple pieces of paper as opposed to other government issued documents like passports or driver's licenses, making them easy to counterfeit. She suggested that the U.S. may not prevent counterfeiting as extensively because it wants to maintain its tax revenue from undocumented immigrants.

Gonzalez also said that immigration can help cities like Baltimore by increasing their population and the number of available jobs. According to Gonzalez, as immigrants settle, they will spend money and pay for services, which creates more job opportunities for others in the community.

She added that most immigrants who come to the U.S. are doing so for the purpose of finding work. Because of this, she believes they fit in with the American traits of having a strong work ethic and a desire for upward mobility.

She also noted that while Latino immigrants are generally the most spoken about when it comes to undocumented immigration, many other communities are affected as well.

"One in five South Koreans is undocumented, and one in eight South Asians is undocumented," Gonzalez said.

At the end of the lecture, Gonzalez described some of the potential ways to address the issue of undocumented immigrants in the U.S., such as providing them amnesty or conducting mass deportations. She highlighted comprehensive immigration reform as one of the most realistic solutions.

"[This] means securing the border and making an enforceable work authorization system," Gonzalez said. "Make the social security card like the passport, like the driver's license so that it is difficult to counterfeit. At the same time, make it easier to enter and work here lawfully because we have labor needs and we want to keep families together."

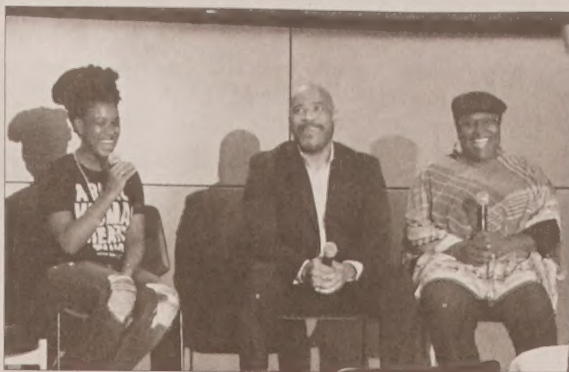
Junior Daisy Duan, who is the director of the education outreach department for IAC, said she hoped the talk would raise awareness for the struggles immigrants face.

"For IAC this semester we have a theme of immigration and refugee issues. Given that November is Asian American and Pacific Heritage Month, we reached out to keynote speakers," she said. "I think that this event was a good introduction for those who are not really aware of immigration issues or immigration history in general."

Junior Evelyn Yeh, co-vice president of IAC, felt that Gonzalez's talk was insightful.

"It was super informative," Yeh said. "She was really prepared and obviously knew her stuff."

# Journalists discuss black narratives in media



COURTESY OF ALYSSA WOODEN  
Sean Yoes and E.R. Shipp spoke on a panel responding to Baltimore Rising.

By ALYSSA WOODEN & SARAH Y. KIM  
News & Features Editors

As part of a weekend of programming around the newly-released HBO documentary *Baltimore Rising*, the Reginald F. Lewis museum hosted a panel discussion titled "Reclaiming the Future of Black News Media" on Nov. 17. Makayla Gilliam-Price, an activist who is featured in the documentary, moderated the panel.

The speakers were Sean Yoes, the editor of *The Baltimore Afro-American* (AFRO), a newspaper published by and for the African American community, and E.R. Shipp, a professor of journalism at Morgan State University. Yoes and Shipp discussed the history of black media publications and the issues black journalists face today.

Gilliam-Price said that she was inspired to host the panel by watching the filming of people's stories in *Baltimore Rising* and that Baltimore citizens should work to share their own narratives as well.

"We should be creating sustainable ways and sustainable institutions to do that work ourselves so we don't have to wait for... that larger entity or organization [to] pick up a camera to report on our stories," she said.

Gilliam-Price is the founder of Assata's Syllabus, an independent media organization that seeks to engage audiences in conversations about current events in Baltimore.

First, the panelists talked about the goals of black media. Shipp discussed the first ever black-owned publication in the U.S., *Freedom's Journal*, which was founded in 1827. She explained that it was formed by a group of free blacks in response to the mostly negative depictions of black people in mainstream media.

"What they said in their first issue of *Freedom's Journal* remains kind of the mission statement today of black media," Shipp said. "And that mission statement was we wish to plead our own cause. For too long others have spoken for us."

Shipp elaborated that black publications continue to be mechanisms for members of the black community to communicate with each other.

"In some cases perhaps the voices were not as strong as they once were, not as united as they were," she said. "But they're there, and they're trying to find a way to connect with your generation."

Shipp expanded on the difficulties black publications have encountered. *Freedom's Journal* lasted only two years, partly due to lack of subscriptions.

"In those days it was aimed at the free black

population along the eastern seaboard," Shipp said. "As you can imagine, there were not that many free blacks and not that many literate blacks."

According to Shipp, black media experienced a transition period in 1955 when Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black boy, was murdered by two white men.

"That was the first time that mainstream — meaning white — media decided to really focus... on what the black press had been focusing on all along," Shipp said. "That was the first time that black reporters and white reporters had worked together in the same space on the same story."

However, even when white reporters began focusing on issues within the black community, black media still faced challenges. Shipp explained how black publications, some of which only had enough resources to publish every week, often could not keep up with television news and mainstream daily publications.

Shipp also brought up the Kerner Commission, established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967, which outlined the sharp divide between whites and blacks in the U.S.

"They pointed to the media as being a major contributor to the problem... and basically challenged mainstream media to get its act together," Shipp said. "So they started hiring black people. And guess who they took those people from? Black media."

This caused even greater problems for black publications, Shipp explained, which struggled to retain their staff. Yoes elaborated that although the black press advocated hard for integration in the U.S., it was ultimately integration that took away many black journalists from black publications.

Shipp recounted her own experience of choosing to start her career at *The New York Times* rather than at a black publication.

"My heart was with black media, but mainstream media could guarantee more of an income, more visibility," she said. "And that became one of the rifts among a number of blacks who were going into the communications field. Do you go with black media, do you go with mainstream media?"

Yoes talked about the history of *The AFRO* and shared his personal experiences with black media.

"It has been a titanic struggle first of all to stay afloat, stay open, stay relevant, because the journalism business model has shifted so dramatically over the last 20 years or so," he said. "We're constantly having to evolve and find new ways to reach audiences."

Despite the challenges of being a journalist for a black publication, Yoes has

enjoyed opportunity to observe the evolution of Baltimore over the course of his tenure at *The AFRO*.

"The more immersed that I've gotten into [journalism], the more connected I've gotten to the people who are trying to make change in our city," he said.

Yoes also explained how one of the main goals of black media is to advocate for poor, oppressed black people. He believes that there is a stigma against so-called advocacy media.

"The perception is that somehow if you're an advocacy journalist you're not as legitimate as the mainstream press, which is a lie," he said. "I take my job as seriously as anybody who works at *The New York Times*."

Shipp highlighted the differences between black and mainstream media, describing African-American journalists who joined mainstream news sources and those who wrote for the "black press" as being pitted against each other.

"We didn't always recognize we were on the same side," she said.

Both panelists agreed that journalism has changed significantly since the first black publications were founded. Shipp believes that the digital age is reshaping the ethics and standards of journalism.

She first described the rise of the "citizen journalist," or somebody who uses social media to spread information on developments in their communities.

"With everybody being potentially a journalist, everybody is working their own standards of whether you're being objective or whether you're going to be clearly advocating a cause," she said.

Shipp added that there is no such thing as truly objective journalism and that even news sources that do not explicitly take stances play a role in advocacy.

"Opinion is going to creep in there," she said. "Even when you're trying to say I'm not telling you what I believe, I'm using my expertise to tell you what's going on."

She urged the audience to pay more attention to a diverse range of news sources and mediums, including websites, television and radio. Shipp also recommended that Baltimore residents pay attention to local news sources, such as *The Baltimore Sun*, *The AFRO* and the recently launched *The Baltimore Beat*.

"I'm not sure if people are doing enough," Shipp said. "I keep finding people who don't know that things are going on."

Yoes agreed that people need to look to a wider variety of news sources.

"The truth is not always in plain sight," he said. "Us who care about the plight of our city, we have to endeavor to dig a little deeper."

Yoes criticized journal-

ists from outside of Baltimore for consistently misrepresenting the City and focusing disproportionately on violence, riots and poverty. As a West Baltimore native, he said that he takes these depictions personally.

He demanded that journalists shift away from this trend and be more careful about the way they report on Baltimore.

"We are in a crisis moment, a tipping point in our city," Yoes said. "We need as many warriors as we can telling our stories authentically and accurately."

He encouraged readers to be proactive in reaching out and pitching stories to *The Afro* and other news sources.

"I look for the input of the community to open my eyes to certain things," Yoes said.

Audience member Aaron Brown, an African-American student at Howard University and friend of Gilliam-Price, agreed that the media was misleading in its depiction of Baltimore.

Brown, who is from Indianapolis, said that he knew little of Baltimore before coming for an internship. Since then, he has developed a strong attachment to the City.

"I knew about *The Wire*," he said. "You see all this action and drug dealing and danger. But there's so much more to Baltimore than just that one facade."

Another audience member, Mark Jean, shared the panelists' concerns about the lack of funding for black publications. He believes the black community needs to unite to solve the problem.

"I think that's something we definitely have to get around," he said. "I think we need somebody like Oprah or other people with a whole bunch of money to come together and form our own corporation."

Gilliam-Price's mother, Zelda Gilliam, also attended the event. She believes the mainstream media can often be very unfair in its depictions of the black community. She shared a story of how several years ago, she was fighting for the life of a family member who was ultimately awarded the death penalty.

"Back then we didn't have social media, so the mainstream media was the only thing we had, so that's the only thing the public heard," she said. "I couldn't get on Facebook and dispute what [*The Baltimore Sun*] was saying. People took it for what it was worth."

Gilliam said that independent media organizations like Assata's Syllabus will address some problems with mainstream media.

"I think youth bringing a voice to journalism and to media in a lot of ways is, I think, going to make it more authentic, make it more grassroots, make it more transparent," she said.



CC BY-SA 4.0/BELACKEXCEL  
Baltimore Rising highlights the narratives of activists like Kwame Rose.

# Charges dropped against final officer in Gray case

By CATHERINE PALMER  
Managing Editor

After facing state criminal charges, a federal criminal investigation and internal disciplinary charges, all six Baltimore Police Department (BPD) officers implicated in the 2015 arrest and death of Freddie Gray will be allowed to remain on the force.

The highest-ranking officers, Lieutenant Brian Rice and Sergeant Alicia White, were the last to have their cases closed. Rice was acquitted of administrative charges by a trial board on Nov. 17 and, according to *The Baltimore Sun*, was reinstated later that day.

According to former Deputy Commissioner Jerry Rodriguez, Rice was the first officer to see Gray on the morning of April 12, 2015. Rice, Officer Garrett Miller and Officer Edward Nero were on bike patrol in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of West Baltimore where Gray, a 25-year-old black man, grew up.

After Rice made eye contact with Gray, Gray immediately began running. The officers then pursued Gray and arrested him after finding a knife on his person. Amateur videos shot by witnesses showed the officers kneeling beside and behind Gray, who was lying facedown on a sidewalk with his hands behind his back.

Officers then lifted Gray up and walked him over to the police van. Gray's feet dragged along the ground, and he cried out. Gray was put inside with his hands cuffed behind his back, but he was not buckled into his seat.

According to *The Sun*, Rice's charges included not securing Gray with a seatbelt, which was in violation

of a new BPD policy that had gone into effect a few days before Gray's arrest, and not answering radio broadcasts.

White's trial was scheduled to begin on Dec. 5, but Baltimore Police Commissioner

Kevin Davis dropped the administrative charges against her on Nov. 22.

Davis chose to dismiss the charges in light of the acquittals of Rice and Officer Caesar Goodson Jr., according to a statement released by the BPD.

"Two separate boards have examined the evidence and have reached the same conclusion. The evidence and allegations against Sergeant White are the same," the statement read. "Commissioner Davis feels proceeding with this administrative hearing would not be in good faith."

White was most strongly implicated in playing a role in Gray's death by Officer William Porter, who has not faced any administrative charges. Porter told investigators that he had asked Gray if he needed medical attention and that Gray had answered affirmatively.

Porter said he had informed White. She told investigators she did not recall being aware of the request. However, she did call for a medic when the van arrived at the Western District police station and Gray was found not to be breathing.

Gray died one week later from a severe spinal cord in-



FILE PHOTO

After the death of Freddie Gray, Hopkins students demonstrated in the Baltimore Uprising.

jury, sparking both peaceful and violent protesting that gained national attention.

Rice, Porter and Goodson would all have faced termination had any of the disciplinary charges against them been upheld.

Miller and Nero chose to accept internal discipline last month in lieu of going before trial boards and, according to *The Sun*, have since returned to active duty. They are the only officers who have been punished in connection with Gray's death.

State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby brought criminal charges against all six officers, including Porter, in May 2015, the day after the state's medical examiner's office ruled Gray's death a homicide.

However, following Porter's mistrial and the acquittals of Nero, Goodson and Rice, Mosby believed the possibility of securing any convictions was unlikely. She dropped the charges against Porter, who was set to be retried, as well as Miller and White in July 2016.

Rice, White, Goodson and Porter were suspended without pay while under indictment. They were put back on the payroll after be-

ing acquitted or having the charges dropped, and they all received back pay. Miller and Nero were suspended with pay because they faced misdemeanor charges.

The Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division began its own investigation into Gray's death in 2015 under former Attorney General Loretta Lynch but concluded in October that none of the officers should be charged. That decision foreclosed the possibility that any of the officers would be held criminally responsible for Gray's death.

The internal disciplinary charges came after the BPD asked neighboring Montgomery County and Howard County police departments to review its officers' actions, according to *The Sun*.

The officers' suspensions were not lifted until after they went through that process, which was completed with the dismissal of White's charges.

While the case has now closed with no lasting consequences for the officers, Baltimore city accepted civil liability in Gray's arrest and death in 2015 and pledged to pay \$6.4 million to Gray's family.

# Indigenous students discuss Thanksgiving

By JAMIE SCHARF  
For *The News-Letter*

The Indigenous Students at Hopkins, a new group under the Office of Multicultural Affairs, hosted "Forgiving Thanksgiving," a round-table discussion and dinner on Thursday, Nov. 16.

Sophomore Tyra Andrews, who helped organize the event, explained that its purpose was to correct inaccuracies regarding the popular beliefs surrounding the history of Thanksgiving.

Andrews said she wanted to remind people to be mindful of the suffering of indigenous people while they enjoy their holiday meals, and she described what really happened at the "first Thanksgiving" between the Pilgrims and the Native Americans in Plymouth, Mass.

"The natives helped the Pilgrims to survive on the land — they didn't know how to grow anything, how to hunt things," Andrews said. "And so, after that, [the Pilgrims] had a huge feast, and they just kind of disregarded the natives."

Andrews began the event by pointing out that Thanksgiving marked the beginning of the decline of Native Americans in North America.

Andrews, along with freshman Joel Espinoza, also discussed the indigenous view of Thanksgiving. They said that for many Americans, Thanksgiving is viewed as a cheerful celebration of family and friends. However, for many Native Americans, Thanksgiving holds a more somber value.

Andrews also explained how Abraham Lincoln created the traditional Thanksgiving narrative during the Civil War.

"Lincoln at the time wanted to find a way to bring everyone back together, to find peace," he said. "He came up with this story that the Pilgrims and the natives had come together and found this common ground and had a big meal."

Andrews said that many Native American narratives

differ from Lincoln's version. Some native accounts even claim that the Pilgrims' feast celebrated a slaughter of native people in the region.

Espinoza explained the story of Squanto, a character in the traditional historical narrative. He said Squanto could aid the settlers because other Europeans had previously taken him as a captive to Spain. There, he learned their language and ways until he was able to earn his passage back to North America. When the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth Rock, Squanto helped them out of his own generosity.

Members of Indigenous Students at Hopkins were careful to note that they personally valued Thanksgiving and did not seek to alter or remove the holiday.

"I just want to put this out there, this is not an attack on Thanksgiving," Andrews said. "We're not saying it's not great to have family eat together."

Joshua Bertalotto, the founder of Indigenous Students at Hopkins, agreed with Andrews. He also emphasized that the goal of the event was to inform students, not alter their customs.

"I don't want people to say that natives don't like Thanksgiving... that's not what we're intending," he said.

Espinoza also emphasized that he was not seeking to change traditional Thanksgiving practices.

"I don't think that anyone can say whether someone is celebrating a holiday correctly," he said.

Typically, many Americans enjoy Thanksgiving meals that include turkey, stuffing, carrots and potatoes. However, Andrews said that the natives and Pilgrims ate different foods at their feast like venison, fish, lobster, berries and squash.

Andrews, Espinoza and Bertalotto agreed that there must be wider acknowledgement of Native-American achievements and contributions to American society.

"I don't think that anyone can say whether someone is celebrating a holiday correctly."

— JOEL ESPINOZA, FRESHMAN

Senior

# Trans speaker explores gender in the digital age

By SIRI TUMMALA  
Senior Staff Writer

In conjunction with LG-BTQ Life and the Digital Scholarship Seminar Series, Gabrielle M.W. Bychowski, a Anisfield-Wolf SAGES Fellow and lecturer at Case Western Reserve University, gave a talk titled "The Signal Never Dies" at Brody Learning Commons on Wednesday.

In her talk, Bychowski explained how the lack of physical "trans spaces" has made the digital world a valuable tool for the transgender community. For example, LGBTQ activists used the internet to grieve for the death of Leelah Alcorn, a transgender girl who committed suicide in 2014 at the age of 17.

She also discussed the way transgender people unconsciously anticipate technologies to help them fulfill bodily changes.

She shared her own account of what it was like to discover she was transgender and having to repress that identity to please others.

"I knew that when my body began anticipating menstruation, I had to translate this into silence," Bychowski said. "I knew when my body began to signal the development of

breasts, that I would have to wait years for the medical technology to finish the process my body could not alone."

As a result, Bychowski suffered a sense of dysphoria. She described having to repress her identity as a state of semi-consciousness.

"One feels like a zombie, present in body but not in mind," she said.

Bychowski does not believe it is important to determine what causes people to identify as transgender.

She pointed out that writers from ancient Rome to the early Christian period have observed trans-consciousness.

"What we know from medicine and history is that transgenderism exists in some form across the world," she said. "Trans-consciousness has existed for a long, long time and seems to be a signal that will never die out in our species."

Bychowski believes that trans-consciousness and dysphoria does not solely originate in the individual's brain.

She pointed to the lack of acceptance many have of the transgender community.

"At worst, the trans person in such a community is

a problem that needs to be fixed," she said. "At best, the trans person is a private issue that should be dealt behind closed doors."

According to Bychowski, trans-consciousness occurs not only in the brain but also in the body and the environment.

"Even medical institutions have concluded that the sufferings trans persons experience is not isolated or originating in their body, but that dysphoria originates in the environment," she said.

Sam Beckham, a faculty member at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, talked about the motivation for coming to the talk as well as what was gained from it.

"There are very few trans-focused talks and opportunities, and I really wanted to jump in and take part in it," Beckham said. "It opened my mind a little bit too because I haven't really explored trans-digital communities at all... So to see the trans community was really powerful."

Tamsyn Mahoney-Steel, the Digital Scholarship Specialist at Hopkins explained the goal of the Digital Scholarship Seminar Series.

"I don't think this is something that should

be tacked on as an afterthought," Mahoney-Steel said. "I decided to make the series all about digital diversity and to invite scholars who could talk about all aspects of what diversity means in the digital realm, whether that's digital spaces for transgender people or how the very nature of encoding something can affect how it is perceived and used."

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## NEWS &amp; FEATURES

# New Chief Diversity Officer shares his views

By SARAH Y. KIM  
News & Features Editor

This semester, the University hired Fenimore Fisher, its first vice provost for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer. He joined the Hopkins community on Oct. 23.

Fisher has spent over 20 years working on diversity and inclusion initiatives. He previously worked as chief diversity officer for New York City. He was also vice president of diversity initiatives and analysis for Walmart and began his diversity career in the non-profit sector.

As chief diversity officer of Hopkins, Fisher will primarily be responsible for overseeing the University's Roadmap on Diversity and Inclusion. He also serves as a co-chair

of the University's Diversity Leadership Council (DLC). In addition, Fisher is an adjunct faculty member at New York University. He believes Hopkins has been progressive in its efforts around diversity and inclusion as compared to its peer institutions.

"Many colleges and universities are trying to accelerate their efforts," he said. "What I do think is unique to Hopkins is that there's been an initial focus on transparency and accountability."

In particular, Fisher believes the Roadmap illustrates the University's efforts to be transparent. The Roadmap was released last October, partly in response to demands from the Black Student Union (BSU). It outlines four major goals: increasing diversity of the Hopkins community; improving opportunities for Hopkins members of various backgrounds; allowing for the engagement of diverse viewpoints; and fostering a climate of respect.

While some students are appreciative of the document and its intentions, others have criticized it for failing to explicitly address racial discrimination as well as neglecting to meet some of the Black Student Union (BSU)'s demands, such as making the Center for Africana Studies an independent department.

Fisher explained that he is currently in the process of assessing the Roadmap and its initiatives.

He encouraged students to critique the document and said that it is important to be receptive to criticism.

"We will rely upon the opinions, the viewpoints of students to craft a lot of our initiatives that we advance forward," he said.

Fisher has begun meeting directly with Hopkins students, including representatives from the DLC. He also attended the Student Government Association (SGA)'s meeting this Tuesday.

"I'm getting a sense that things are improving, but there is much more work to be done," he said.

Fisher characterized the Roadmap as a comprehensive starting point. He spe-

cifically pointed to its Faculty Diversity Initiative.

"Such a significant investment speaks volumes to the level of commitment," he said.

He added that it is important for Hopkins to clearly communicate its values.

"You want to make sure that people have a basic understanding of what you mean when you say diversity and inclusion," he said.

The excellence of an institution, Fisher said, depends on its diversity.

"We have to create an environment where we value,

**"Things are improving, but there is much more work to be done."**

— FENIMORE FISHER, CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

we respect, we broaden our culture to be welcoming of people of all differences and backgrounds," he said.

Fisher discussed how his childhood led to his interest in diversity work, citing

his parents as his inspiration.

"Early on, they really emphasized a focus on serving as an advocate for equity and inclusion," he said.

His ultimate goal is for people within the Hopkins community to acknowledge the University as a leader in diversity and inclusion in higher education.

"I'm not necessarily the type of diversity and inclusion practitioner that loves to go out and get awards," Fisher said. "I'm more focused on our internal communities to view and rate us as being committed to this work."

# Students tell their personal stories at TEDxJHU

TEDx, FROM A1

informed you are on their condition."

Junior Yash Jain followed Barrio. He detailed his unique experience of growing up in five different countries and said that this showed him his privilege and inspired him to give back to the community both at home and in Baltimore.

After living in the United States, England and Norway, he moved to Beijing and later Mumbai. There, he saw the drastic differences in the prosperity available to each country's population.

Jain described his impression of India.

"Millions of people lived in slums, just kilometers away from [business magnate] Mukesh Ambani's 27-story home," Jain said.

He explained how just being born into a certain family in a certain place can predetermine one's privilege. He decided to take action and began to teach English in a local school for underprivileged children in Mumbai.

Jain was impressed with one student in particular who took a keen interest in learning from him.

"This kid is doing everything in his power to learn as much as he could," he said.

Jain also said that everyone in the audience was in a position of privilege and urged them to give back to their communities.

He emphasized the importance of getting out of the "Hopkins bubble" and going into the city, meeting new people and being more engaged in the community.

The final speaker, Jojo Castellanos, recounted

his life through a hypothetical letter.

Through this letter, he openly talked to the audience about his personal experience as a sexual assault survivor, coming out as a member of the LGBTQ community and finding the inner

strength to stop the continuation of sexual violence.

"I realized that I had to fight," Castellanos said. "No one can speak for you. Only you can speak for you. And when you are in situations where your voice can't be heard, you need to get out."

Castellanos explained that his initial solution to avoid hate was to focus on his studies and move to a new location for college.

However, he found that this was not the answer when he realized that his roommate at Hopkins was committing sexual assault on campus.

"I knew what I had to do," Castellanos said. "I had been here before. I wasn't going to be silent this time. I was going to be the change that I needed as a child."

Castellanos felt it was important for him to speak out to help people. Consequently, he became involved with a slew of groups on campus advocating for social change.

"I know now that I have a home," Castellanos said.



COURTESY OF KATY WILNER

Speakers at TEDxJHU addressed issues such as mental health, privilege and sexual assault.

"There are people who care for me. The people I surround myself with — they love me."

Overall, the event had positive feedback from students, who noted that these speakers were especially influential because they are Hopkins students.

Freshman Lauren Duan said that she enjoyed listening to all of the speakers.

"They talked about difficult topics," Duan said. "The idea of TEDx tells us to spread ideas worth spreading, and I think all of those really applied and can start a conversation about things we don't normally think about in our daily lives."

Sophomore Sumera Yego explained that she particularly enjoyed Castellanos' speech.

"[He] talked about something really traumatic — being a victim of sexual violence," Yego said. "But not only that, he talked about the importance of never silencing yourself, no matter who is trying to silence you, and trying to embody this

daily."

Yego elaborated that it is important to speak up for yourself when facing challenges.

"It really clearly addressed the issue of sexual violence, and it also brought up the important thing that you should never silence yourself and face your problems head on," she said.

Junior Rasha Bara agreed that Castellanos' speech moved her as well.

"I had never known everything about [Castellanos], and seeing him give his truth, give advice and encourage people to speak up was very inspiring," Bara said.

Freshman George Trujillo particularly liked how the "Note to Self" theme made the event more personal.

"It made it so you're more able to relate to the stories. It was definitely an experience hearing those stories and hearing the speakers' passion and motivation," Trujillo said. "It was very enlightening and makes you think about what's going on."

# Graduate students oppose Republican bill to tax tuition waivers



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Currently, the Senate bill does not have the provision to tax tuition waivers.

GRADUATE, FROM A1

"If we got taxed on our tuition, it would be about half of what we make," Grant said. "We make about \$25,000, and I'm estimating the tax would be around \$10,000 or 12,000."

Grant also expressed concerns that pursuing a PhD could become a privilege afforded to only the very wealthy.

"It would make getting a PhD unviable for most people," Grant said. "It could say a lot about our country and our values, like do we really value knowledge and contributing to science and technology?"

Daniel Esquivel, class of 2017, wanted to pursue a PhD because of his experiences doing research as an undergraduate. However, the provision may potentially affect his decision.

"I was under the impression that tuition waivers

would make living as a PhD student somewhat affordable," he said. "Diminishing those [PhD] opportunities during a time in which issues in science are more complex than ever seems completely counterintuitive. It seems bizarre and intellectually detached."

On Nov. 13, the Graduate Representative Organization (GRO) sent out an online petition demanding a response from the University. As of Nov. 17, the petition obtained a total of 1,185 signatures, which GRO delivered to the Office of the Provost.

GRO wants the University to increase transparency in their communications with graduate students about this issue. Additionally, they are requesting that the University appoint a point of contact for concerned graduate students and hold information sessions or town halls about

the possible consequences of the tax plan.

In response, the University sent out an email to graduate students on Nov. 17, addressing their concerns and assuring them that they were working with other Universities as well as allies in Congress to oppose the tax changes.

Executive Director of Media Relations Dennis O'Shea also wrote an email to *The News-Letter* on behalf of the University, reiterating that the school is working to combat the tax bill.

"We are working to oppose any changes in the tax code that could be detrimental to students, other members of our university community and the university itself," O'Shea wrote. "Enactment of those provisions would hurt students and their families and limit access to higher education. We are encouraged that the tuition provisions are not currently in the Senate bill."

On Wednesday, GRO held a two-hour call-a-thon. In an email to *The News-Letter*, they expressed hope that students will call their representatives in Congress, particularly in the states of Tennessee, Arizona, Oklahoma, Kansas, Maine, Wisconsin and Montana.

"The GRO is working on engaging as many commu-

nity members as possible to call the Senators. We sent out an email yesterday with the list of Senators, their office phone numbers as well as Twitter aliases to the graduate student list-serv in the effort to mobilize them against this issue," GRO wrote.

They also explained that GRO provided graduate students with premade tweets and calling scripts and that they are working closely with the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS).

While this tax plan will not affect all students in the University, it is believed that this bill will more adversely impact students at private institutions as opposed to public ones.

Vetri Velan, a PhD student in physics at the University of California, Berkeley, analyzed the tax plan in a memo and spoke to *The News-Letter* about its effects on graduate stu-

dents. His analysis went viral on Facebook, and it was cited by many major publications, including *The New York Times* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

"We see strong evidence that a PhD student at a public university would see their taxes go up by 30 to 60 percent," Velan said. "A student at a private university would see their taxes increase by a factor of two to four."

Velan also emphasized that this bill would more adversely affect what he called "non-traditional students." This includes students who have children or spouses, students with high medical expenses and international students.

"If this bill passes, we're going to see a lot fewer students going to graduate school at all. We're going to see fewer students going to school at private universities, or in the United States," Velan said.

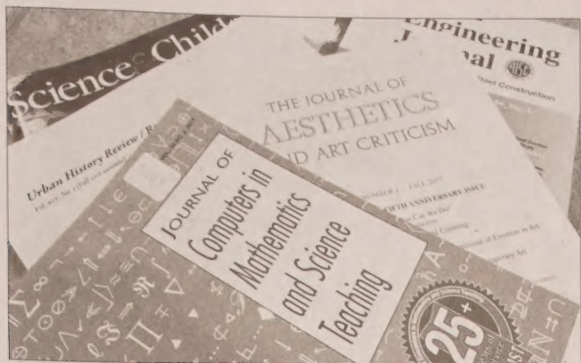
## Errata: April 1 Edition

In the November 16, 2017 edition of *The News-Letter*, the article "Kasich urges students to bridge the partisan divide" stated that Aleena Nasir supported John Kasich during the 2016 election. She was actually a Hillary Clinton supporter.

*The News-Letter* regrets this error.

NEWS & FEATURES

# How does Hopkins help students get published?



COURTESY OF JACOB TOOK

Students from various majors pursue research and try to get published.

**PUBLISHING, FROM A1**  
may lack the necessary expertise.

Caroline Lupetini, a junior in International Studies, completed an independent study researching Russian interference in recent elections in Europe. She said she has not published her paper because it is too long.

Lupetini agreed that it can be difficult to be knowledgeable enough about a project as an undergraduate. She also added that humanities research is generally an independent and individualized effort.

"My experience was finding a mentor and developing a relationship with the professor, whereas STEM research is more that you are part of a team," she said. "You have to find your passion project in humanities or social science because no one else is necessarily working on that project."

She also said that part of the University's renown as a research institution is due to the work its students publish and said that those in humanities fields should get more recognition.

"If Hopkins wants to increase its prestige, it should focus on getting more humanities [students] published," she said.

Mechanical engineering senior Sharon Maguire published a "how-to" paper after she designed a way to 3D-print a laryngoscope, a typically expensive piece of surgical equipment, for about \$40.

Maguire said that she gets credit for her research and therefore can take fewer classes, which helps her manage her schedule and makes publication more accessible.

"It's not the norm to have time for [research]," she said. "That's the great thing about doing research for credit."

Cowley believes that giving credit for researching is not sufficient and that the University should make sure students receive financial compensation.

"Credits are wonderful, but it doesn't buy you food," she said. "It is hard trying to balance research and work and getting money to pay your rent."

According to Tritsch, it is easier to get credit for research in STEM fields. Taylor Veracka, a senior in Film and Media Studies, published a paper on democracy in Taiwan that she wrote for a class. She agreed that there's more support for students in STEM to get published because they are expected to do research.

"My friend — she's worked on research opportunities where she's worked in the lab and helped write the final report, and has gotten published that way," Veracka said. "For humanities and social sciences you could do that, but it's not a track that a lot of people fol-

low."

She said that she took a class on how to complete research in social sciences and the humanities and would like to see more resources that provide students with that type of information.

"If those kinds of opportunities were offered to encourage students to think they might get published, that would be beneficial," Veracka said.

Last spring, the Hopkins Office of Undergraduate Research (HOUR) was created in order to make research and publication opportunities more accessible to undergraduates.

HOUR Director Feilim Mac Gabhann, who is a biochemical engineer, said that they want to work with students across departments, not just those in STEM.

"The classic version of research, the cells in a dish, that's one type of it, but so too is anything that involves discovery and creativity," he said. "Music composition at Peabody we think of as part of this, original writing we see as part of this."

Mac Gabhann said that students' needs vary depending on their fields of study and their personal interests.

"The experience of undergraduates is very variable," he said. "Some walk in and the first lab they knock on the door of they get a position and have a great experience, and some people find it harder to find a position or to be supported while they are in that position."

HOUR manager Tracy Smith has had STEM experience, but she also holds a business degree and said she has a more general base rather than a true science background.

Smith said that HOUR hopes to facilitate positive relationships between students and their mentors, which she described as crucial for research.

"If you're not connecting with a mentor, then you're not stuck there," she said. "We have a huge resource of faculty and postdocs and research associates across the University, and if you're having a bad experience, find one that works."

Mac Gabhann also said that the relationships students make with their mentors will follow them into their careers.

"Those mentor-mentee relationships last a very long time and they're very important, so it's helpful to get them right," he said. "Not everyone is a perfect match. There are different types of personalities. Certain people work in certain ways."

Smith said that they work to connect undergraduates with researchers in an effort to set up those relationships. She said that faculty from the medical school have contacted HOUR in search of undergraduates.

"By coming through us, we're able to target specific departments where they're going to get a better response rate," she said. "They've been successful in finding undergraduates to work on their projects."

Vice Dean for Humanities and Social Sciences Betsy Bryan, who has worked with Tritsch on some projects, said that it can be more difficult for undergraduate students to find a mentor to work with.

"What we see much less of, generally in the humanities, is a long line of names that are attributed to an article," she said. "Most papers in the humanities are single-authored."

However, Bryan said that there are faculty who are committed to working with undergraduates in the humanities.

"More people are working with undergrads and seeing that their contributions are research worthy," she said. "In the humanities, I think the whole concept of undergraduate research and publication is changing."

Students agreed that finding a mentor was helpful to their research and helping them get published.

Maguire said that her professors and advisors were supportive of her project and wanted her to be successful. She said that speaking with professors or advisors can help students get started or get their papers published.

"They remember their first time going into the lab and what it's like to be clueless," she said. "Chances are they have been published dozens of times, and they can help you. It's all about not being afraid to ask for help."

Veracka said that even though she published her paper after her class ended, she emailed her professor to ask if he thought she should try to publish it. She then continued to correspond with him during the submissions process.

"When I was submitting it, I would keep him updated, and he was like, 'That's great, send me a citation,'" she said. "It was just validation that it was a good idea, and that I should get it published."

Senior neuroscience major Sam Allen is writing a textbook chapter and works closely with his lab's principal investigator (PI).

"He's been in this field for so long, he understands more of the complexities behind it, and so he just reviewed it," Allen said. "You have to give credit to people that did a lot of the preliminary groundbreaking stuff, which a lot of the time you miss because there's other stuff built on it."

He said that their project is delayed because he and his PI have sent revisions and suggestions. He

also said that managing his time has been challenging.

According to Allen, students should engage in research projects that they're passionate about, even if they cannot get published.

"A lot of people who want to publish and they can't — they see it as a failing," Allen said. "The goal shouldn't be to go to a professor and say you want to publish something. That shows that you're looking for the end goal and not the research itself."

He said that it was important to research something that interests you and added that he wouldn't have been able to finish his textbook chapter had he not been interested in the subject.

However, Tritsch said that students should try to get published so that they can show that they have experience in the field.

"If you've finished your project, you should publish it. If you don't publish it, why are you even doing it?" he said. "If you're going on after undergrad, it's even more important because it helps you getting into grad school."

Bryan said that undergraduates no longer have to write book-length manuscripts in the humanities. She added that increasingly, more weight is given to undergraduate papers.

"An undergraduate can access deep information in a way that they couldn't have done years ago," she said.

Tritsch said that the deadlines that graduate students have in their classes are more flexible than they are for undergraduates.

"It just takes a while and you have to be persistent at it or you just won't get published," he said. "It's harder to find time, even for me. I have trouble finding time to do the research I want to do."

Cowley agreed that it could be difficult to manage her time as an undergraduate but said that it is important for students to pursue something that they are passionate about.

"If you don't love it along the way then what's the point?" she said. "Going in with the mentality that publishing is the end goal is really dangerous because you miss the opportunity to show what you're passionate about."

Trisha Parayil contributed reporting.

# SGA revisits Roadmap on Diversity and Inclusion

By **HALEY HANSON**  
For *The News-Letter*

The Student Government Association (SGA) discussed resources for mental health on campus, diversity in faculty and student representation, and upcoming events and initiatives at their weekly meeting on Tuesday.

Chief Diversity Officer and Vice Provost of Diversity and Inclusion Fenimore Fisher, who joined Hopkins in October, spoke before the meeting officially commenced to talk about the University's new approach to fostering diversity and representation in the Hopkins community.

"I wanted to make sure that as part of my unofficial onboarding... that I spend time actually meeting with the SGA," Fisher said.

Fisher serves as the primary steward for the University's Roadmap on Diversity and Inclusion, published last October. He asked SGA members to offer him comments on the Roadmap.

SGA members discussed several issues related to diversity. Sophomore Class President Anthony Boutros voiced concerns about distinguishing Middle Easterners from whites, which he says has led to a dismissal of representation for the group in the past.

Freshman Class Senator Lauren Paulet talked about inclusion for the disabled on campus, citing an incident where a prospective student was unable to join a tour group because the route lacked wheelchair access at certain points.

"I was wondering if there's something that [you] could do to make our campus more ADA friendly," Paulet said.

Senior Class Senator Joshua Bertalotto talked about acknowledging the importance of Native American representation on campus, something that he feels Hopkins has neglected.

"We are such a small population on campus, but I think that often means we're overlooked," Bertalotto said. "Now, more than ever, we need more help to increase those numbers in recruitment and things like that."

Fisher promised to consider such concerns and discussed how the University will address them as it aims to step up diversity and inclusion on campus.

Senior Class Senator Mireraf Tekka, chair of the committee on Academic Affairs, talked about a survey going out to non-premed students in an attempt to improve advising. She also has been meeting with various department heads to further a proposal to include syllabi and class ratings on SIS.

Executive Secretary Rushabh Doshi explained how Hopkins could model its class registration process after Harvard's.

"When they're signing up for classes, it shows the workload... and they also show the average grade," Doshi said. "We brought this up and they said that this is something that's definitely a possibility, they're going to be able to see to it."

Boutros, who is head of the Civic Engagement Committee, spoke about a planned campaign for student voter registration next semester in conjunction with the organization Turbovote.

"Next semester we will go ahead and start pushing to get people registered," Boutros said. "My goal is still to get 2,500 people on it by the end of the school year and then get all the freshmen next year in orientation to get trained and get Turbovote so that by the midterms as many people as possible are voting from Hopkins."

The SGA also voted to pass a \$185 bill presented by Executive Treasurer Mi Tu that would fund a cultural highlight event on African culture hosted by the Office of International Students.

Junior Class President Ash Panakam gave updates about the SGA's recent push to improve resources for mental health on campus after a meeting with Matthew Torres, executive director of the Counseling Center. Panakam mentioned that the library will soon be undergoing renovations, and there have been calls to create zen meditation spaces for students as well as the creation of a counseling room in the library. There have also been calls for increased funding and resources for the Center.

"Right now, the wait time is two weeks, which is pretty long, but they haven't been able to bring it down," Panakam said.

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## NEWS &amp; FEATURES

## Writers in Baltimore Schools aims to foster creativity in public school students

WRITERS, FROM A1

going to the Inner Harbor or Hampden, so that's why I originally joined," Haenn said. "There was one girl who would hug me every time I came in, which made me really happy."

According to Haenn, around a quarter of students in the classroom where she volunteered were interested in writing and were able to delve into a creative outlet different from what is normally offered in school.

"The poems and stuff that they create are shocking, that they are coming from a sixth grader," she said.

In addition, Haenn said that teachers are often required to stick to a strict curriculum.

"I know the teacher that I specifically worked with, she really focused on bringing in outside people to provide creative things," she said. "[The kids] definitely expressed different creativity than they would in their normal language arts [curriculum]."

Undergraduates have created lesson plans that include poem and story prompts that allow the kids to write anything they want.

For instructors, the lessons they teach middle schoolers through WBS can mirror their instruction with older students in other classrooms.

Jessica Hudgins, who earned an MFA in Writing Seminars, has taught at both WBS and Hopkins. She used the same two poems — Langston Hughes' "The Dream Keeper" and Emily Dickinson's "To Fill a Gap" — in both her WBS class and her class of Writing Seminars undergraduates.

"We were able to talk in both spaces about the same thing, but in different ways depending on the age difference," she said. "It was a cool experiment to see what I had to do in order to have the same conversation about what the poems mean with both groups."

WBS was created by

Patrice Hutton, a Hopkins Writing Seminars alumna, in 2008 with the help of a community fellowship grant.

Hutton originally focused the program on middle school writers but said WBS has evolved over time to include writers of all grade levels. She said that the organization tries to form long-term connections with its students.

"Even in college, we'll bring some of [our students] back to work as teaching assistants or instructors," she said. "One student who was with us from the very beginning, our first seventh grade group at Margaret Brent [Elementary/Middle School], is now our activities director at camp."

This year, in-school programs are offered at Margaret Brent Elementary/Middle School, Calverton Elementary/Middle School and Barclay Elementary/Middle School.

Students in the WBS Summer Studio program, an immersive writing retreat, collaborated with *The Baltimore City Paper* to create a view of the city through profiles, poetry and prose that was published in September. Marc Steiner, a local radio host, and Lester Spence,

an associate professor of Africana Studies at Hopkins, were among the people profiled.

Hutton said that programs like WBS are necessary now more than ever because the introduction of stan-

dardized education into Baltimore's public schools has decreased the amount of space available for students to express their creativity.

However, this is not the only problem plaguing Baltimore's public schools.

#### A school system in debt

Students in the Baltimore public school system are affected by debt that cuts into the opportunities provided in the classroom.

According to *The Baltimore Sun*, the City's school system is currently \$130 million in debt. School en-

rollments are also decreasing, which exacerbates the problem as Maryland's state system awards more money to schools with higher numbers of students.

School enrollment has fallen during three of the last four years, and the trend is expected to continue, so city officials are working to get parents to enroll their children in public schools to better distribute funds.

According to *The Sun*, state and city officials also pledged \$180 million over the next three years to offset some of the current debt that is attributed to the decreasing enrollment as well as higher teacher salaries and a school construction program.

However, other problems still persist. Some schools are understaffed, even with decreasing student numbers. According to *The Sun*, 115 people were laid off at Baltimore public schools in June. This is the third straight year of layoffs in the district.

In addition, large class sizes can make it difficult for students to receive individual attention.

Hutton reports knowing teachers who have 38 students to oversee in a single classroom; one of the classrooms Haenn worked in had more than 30 sixth graders. Some Baltimore educators fear that increasing class sizes will make it impossible to serve their students well.

School staff was also cut by nine percent between 2015 and 2018. Many believe that underfunding, as well as fewer faculty, makes individualized attention for students a rarity, if not impossible.

Despite these challenges, WBS says they aim to help provide students with the creative outlets that they might miss out on in the classroom.

While higher test scores have not necessarily been recorded from WBS participants, students have had pieces published in outlets like The Poetry Foundation's blog, *The Washington Post* and *The Baltimore Sun*.

Additionally, instructors and student volunteers say that kids love getting to experience creativity that is different than their usual classroom activities. The program's first class of students has now graduated



FILE PHOTO

WBS was founded by a Writing Seminars alum and recruits faculty and students to volunteer with the program.

from high school, and some of them have continued to practice the creative arts in college.

Baltimore is far from being the only city in debt. Public school systems are underfunded across the nation.

According to *U.S. News & World Report*, poor pensioning is the underlying cause behind debt many systems face. *The Sun* defines poor pensioning as "a gap between the funds in the [city's] pension account and the amount owed to retirees."

On the student-teacher level, many cities have programs similar to Writers in Baltimore Schools.

The InsideOut (iO) program in Detroit has a long history of creativity. It has worked with over 50,000 students to help them find their voices since its founding in 1995. Kids and parents can also take advantage of 826michigan, which offers a notable after-school creative writing program.

Baltimore itself is also home to organizations like: 901 Arts, a youth arts center; Baltimore Youth Arts, an arts entrepreneurship and job readiness program; and Wide Angle Youth Media, which promotes media arts education. These organizations work to provide young people with opportunities to explore their creative interests outside of the classroom.

Some think that the answer to Baltimore's public school system debt is increasing enrollment, but Hutton wrote in an email to *The News-Letter* that schools need more than higher numbers.

She argues that they need racially equitable funding. Paula Dressel of the Race Matters Institute defines racially equitable funding as the idea that it is "critical to invest in ways that erase those gaps that for too long have compromised the promise of children, families, and communities of color."

Dora Malech, a member of the WBS advisory board and an assistant professor in the Writing Seminars department, said that problems students face in Baltimore schools do not stem from the classroom itself, but they do impact how children perform and express themselves.

Baltimore's transportation infrastructure, for example, makes it difficult for

students to travel to after-school activities.

"To have creative opportunities in the classroom or in these summer programs are really, really crucial," Malech said. "Feeling like you have a creative community, feeling like you're able to use your voice and you have this creative outlet and you're building your academic skills and your literary skills at the same time is really valuable."

#### A look into the future

WBS is currently in its third year of partnering with Hopkins. High school students travel to Hopkins for classes, while undergraduates visit elementary and middle school students in their classrooms.

Rachael Barillari, a seventh and eighth grade teacher at Margaret Brent Elementary School, said that collaborating with WBS has been beneficial for her students.

The theme of her classroom is "We are college bound," a slogan that especially permeates her students' creative work with Hopkins students.

"We talk a lot about college readiness," she said. "The biggest benefit is that middle school kids [get to] see actual college students come into their classroom, talk about what they do at college and work with them on their writing."

Barillari took her sixth graders on a tour of the Hopkins campus last year, where they ran into a student who had been volunteering in her classroom.

"The writers we work with at Hopkins have definitely been a huge asset for working with middle school kids. It helps [college readiness] to have people at Hopkins as the students' mentors in the organization," Barillari said. "It has been a wonderful collaboration."

As a non-profit organization, WBS relies on donations, foundation support and fundraising efforts in order to fund its efforts. Its future depends on ensuring that funding will continue to support various programs.

Malech explained that it is hard to measure the impact that creative programs have on students, which can make the task of convincing potential donors to contribute money difficult.

"We have this anecdotal evidence, but I do think it's always a challenge in terms of funding to be able to quantify that," Malech said. "That's something we can really build on in the future and we've talked about a lot as a board."

She said that because of these challenges, WBS needs to be creative in how it fundraises.

"How do we show to funders, to the outside world, even at Hopkins, a place that's very data based — how do we show the impact that we see and that the students themselves see in a very real way — how do we quantify that?" she said.

Malech added that it is difficult to be dependent on year-by-year fundraising without a permanent endowment, as is the case for many local grassroots organizations in Baltimore.

"That's an area where I think Hopkins students could get more involved: in terms of thinking of creative ways to fund the organization and to draw attention to the organization to keep it sustainable," she said.

In terms of future programming, Hutton said WBS is looking to involve itself more with local media outlets, an initiative spurred by WBS' summer collaboration with *The City Paper*.

"Two of their editors came out to our summer camp and did two days of workshops with kids, and we actually collaborated to publish a fully student-written issue of *The City Paper*," she said. "So I'd say there are things like that kind of on the horizon in Baltimore. We really want to work with different platforms to get student voices out there."

There are also individual projects in the program's future, but Malech says that no matter how WBS expands, the emphasis should always be on the students.

"[The program] could grow indefinitely into more and more schools, but I think it would take more funding to do that, and I've seen nonprofits spread themselves very thin," Malech said. "It makes a lot of sense, and it's healthy for the organization to focus on really connecting with each individual student rather than trying to only aim for numbers."



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Through WBS, Hopkins undergraduates lead workshops for students at Margaret Brent Elementary School.

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## VOICES

Hopkins is a diverse university, where an incredible mix of cultures, academic interests and personalities coexist and thrive...

## What it's like being passive aggressive



Meagan Peoples  
Think about it

As a non-confrontational person, arguments are really hard for me. Whether it's witnessing a fight between my parents, getting caught between two friends or having to deal with an outburst of my own carefully repressed anger, there's no part about arguing that I enjoy or am good at. To compensate for this, I am the queen of being passive aggressive.

Once, mad at my sister on the way to the grocery store, I bought the sugariest, most fattening snack I could find so that she would gain weight. Another time, mad at a friend for a reason I can't even recall, I deleted Facebook for three days so that I could pretend not to have seen their messages.

Often, people consider any kind of non-verbal, non-face-to-face conflict passive aggressive. But to me, that's just an equally aggressive text message or post-it note. Of course, it's far better than direct confrontation, but it's still too close to a real argument for me.

Texting never seems especially passive aggressive to me. I mean, the person can respond. You've gained a few extra seconds to think and the ability to "not see a message" but other than that, you're basically just having a non-verbal confrontation.

More importantly, these fights can take place at any time. You could be furiously texting your roommate about their inability to take out the trash, work yourself into a fervor and then have to put a smile on your face as the lady sitting next to you on the bus strikes up a conversation.

No, as far as I'm concerned, texting is not a passive form of communication. Truly the most passive form of aggression is to simply ignore the problem until it either goes away or blows up in your face — another technique I am quite familiar with.

While I would never recommend the passive life to anyone, (in fact, it's definitely way healthier to air your grievances when you have them so that they can be resolved) I wanted my fellow less-than-aggressive people to know that they're not alone.

So the next time you think you're being silly or petty for turning the heater down just a tad in your roommate's room, know that you definitely are petty but that I totally would have done the same thing.

## Growing up and the process of reinventing yourself in college



Lily Kairis  
Lil Musings

Coming back to Hopkins after Thanksgiving break, I find myself reflecting on life with fresh eyes. For me, it's always like this: Vacation incites introspection.

The transition from radical college independence to the security of my parents' house is an odd reminder of how far I've come since high school. For instance: How crazy is it that I call that place "my parents' house?" Suddenly, Baltimore feels just as much (if not more) like home as Wilmington, Delaware, despite only having spent 3.5 years here.

But the differences, of course, are more than just my place of residence. When I was in high school, I had exclusively female friends. I rode horses. I played the trumpet in marching band and secretly felt extremely out of touch with my marching band friend group, whose conversations mainly revolved around *Kingdom Hearts* and *Minecraft*.

I cancelled plans with friends to stay in and watch movies with my parents. I ran an anonymous Twitter account that addressed pickup lines to various members of the high school "popular crowd." Long story short — I was a dork. Now, I don't claim to have undergone some head-to-toe *Princess Diaries*-esque makeover during my years of college. I did not exchange my glasses for contacts and miraculously become the Queen of

Genovia. For all intents and purposes, I am still the dork I was before. Now, however, I am confidently dorky.

I publish my sassy quips in *The News-Letter* and self-promote my blog. In my ways, I believe the key to my happiness was self-acceptance.

In order to find friends who loved me and opportunities that fulfilled me, I had to stop doubting myself. I needed to let go and trust that who I am is good enough.

The first step was Hopkins. In my senior year of high school, college life was the light at the end of my proverbial tunnel. My dreams (printed under my senior photo: "I will become... a writer/activist/talk show host/half-broke life enthusiast") were much too large for small-town mediocrity. So I obsessed over university acceptances with constant zeal.

I watched YouTube videos ("10 Things I wish I knew Before College," "What Nobody Told Me about Freshman Year," "Why I Chose Yale") and scrolled through personal blogs from Ivy League students, dreaming of myself as a plaid-wearing, moleskin-toting, Northeastern collegiate.

I wanted ivy walls and passionate discussions about social justice. I wanted classes that challenged me and classmates who inspired me.

Although it didn't seem obvious at first, Hopkins was the solution to my striving. After a week of rejection letters, I ripped open that fat, golden-sealed acceptance packet with the eagerness of Charlie opening his golden ticket to the chocolate factory.

I'll save you the details of my joy — scholarships, the excellence of the creative writing program and the kindness of the professors and students I met on my

visits — but soon, I was sold. I took one look at the stained glass of the Hutzler Reading Room and whispered to my dad: "This is it." But that's not the point of this article.

All dramatics aside, I don't think Hopkins was the one place on Earth that could have endowed me with the confidence I needed to break out of my social awkwardness.

I did not need a Writing Seminars and film degree to become secure in myself. The school is not magic, and there is nothing in the Baltimore air that suddenly cured all my woes. The fact of the matter is, I didn't need college to change me — I created that change within myself.

I was one of few future freshmen who actually read (and enjoyed) our recommended novel, *Happier*.

I vividly remember lying on my bed on a balmy

afternoon in early August, rereading a quote from one of the final chapters: "Visualize the kind of person you want to be — how do you treat yourself? How do you treat others? How do you act? How do you let others treat you? Everyday, strive to become that person. Step by step, you will. Your life is in your control." I read this quote, and despite the self-help patronization, I legitimately felt empowered.

For once, I began to realize: My past does not define me. Because it was a new state and a new school in which I knew zero members of the incoming class, Hopkins seemed like the perfect opportunity for my reinvention. I wrote on the inside cover of my 2014 planner: I am under no obligation to be

the same person I was yesterday, or even the same person I was five minutes ago. And with that, I freed myself from the self-destructive habits of my past.

Of course, the actual process of self-growth is a lot more painstaking than writing a quote in your journal.

Don't get me wrong, my freshman year was challenging. However, I ultimately gained an overwhelming amount of bravery.

Coming back from Thanksgiving break, I recognized yet again: My personality is remarkably different than it was four years ago.

This transformation reminds me of an episode of the *Invisibilia* podcast I listened to last spring. It was entitled, "The Personality Myth," and in it, the hosts debunk the fallacy that personality is an ingrained, consistent facet of who we are as people.

On the contrary, personality is fluid. Peoples' bodies are changing all the time: your blood constantly circulates; every atom within you regenerates; even your memories change every time you recall them.

On a purely physical level, we are not the people we were yesterday or even five minutes ago. To further prove this, the *Invisibilia* hosts interviewed a collection of people about their past and present selves.

One interview that stood out to me (and which I will probably never forget): a formerly convicted rapist named Tim.

Long story short, this man — who was once erratic and angry — made a conscious decision to fight the demons within him.

One day in prison, after having a sudden fist fight with an inmate who he had befriended, Tim looked in the mirror and saw something he despised. "There was something dark buried within me... something that hated the world, that yearned for chaos, that couldn't love or trust. Something that was constantly vying for expression. But I didn't want to let that darkness control me anymore."

And so, this man asked to be relocated to a private cell, and for the next three years of his imprisonment, he existed in solitude. He meditated, read books by Gandhi and Socrates, and he wrote poetry about his feelings. Years later, he requested that his prison in New York host a TEDx conference for all the inmates to perform their talents and creative works.

"I don't communicate with aggression anymore," Tim said in his interview with *Invisibilia*. I communicate with art. Ten years after his conviction, at the time of his interview, Tim had lost all traces of his former self. "I'd grown to believe: I'm serving time for a crime I didn't commit," Tim said. "That person isn't the real me."

Yes, this might seem difficult to believe. I understand that. Can we really say that a former rapist isn't guilty of his past crime? Can we believe that our past personality just disappears? Can people really change for good?

Even after all this self-reflection, I still feel eons away from certainty. I do not know, for sure, all the intricacies of personality and self-growth.

I might be speaking nonsense here. My so-called self-transformation might just be a placebo effect. However, if there's one thing I know for certain, it's this: You are never bound to your past.

I am still the dork I was before. Now, however, I am confidently dorky.

## In defense of prose poetry: the work of Allison Benis White



Bessie Liu  
Write Me

I've talked to some people before who have told me in passing that they don't consider prose poetry to be real poetry. Prose poetry, as the name implies, weaves together elements of both poetry and prose.

Though such poems may appear on paper as blocks of text reminiscent of paragraphs, in no way do they lose any elements of poetry due to their format. Although prose poets are not able to take the same liberties with line breaks and punctuation as verse poets are, they are nonetheless still able to use the same vivid images and language as they would otherwise with verse.

The first prose poem I ever read was "Waiting," written by the poet Allison

Benis White. It cycles between several key images: two women sitting together but preoccupied with their own thoughts; dancers performing and ignoring their pain; and a child floating on a boat, throwing stones into the lake.

Immediately, the challenge seems to be how to connect all of these images together. In fact, perhaps my favorite part of White's poetry is her fluid movement between different sets of images. To me, this reflects the blustery, breathless realizations the speaker makes throughout the poem on what connects these different images.

I also find it interesting how the poet manages to characterize the speaker in such a short span of time.

Multiple times in this poem, the speaker understates her convictions by using words like "maybe" and "could be." An example is the line "This could be an aerial sketch of twirling ballerinas, I think." In doing this, the speaker not only shows that she is not sure in the truth of what she sees, but also helps draw parallels

and transitions between the otherwise separate images she uses throughout the poem.

The entire poem seems to be about movement. There's the concept of movement through time, as the speaker jumps back and forth between her present location in a restaurant to what is likely a memory of playing on the lake as a child. There's physical movement from the "twirling ballerinas," which calls to mind the paintings of Degas.

There's the repeated image of a circle: In the entire third stanza, the speaker's confession that she's "occupied with my love of circles" highlights the endless circular motion that connects the images together with the idea of being unable to move forward.

There's also a certain stillness, a lack of movement in the dancers each "ignoring the small white pain in her ankle" and the child "[floating] on her back to stare at stars," both conveying a sense of isolation amid moments of serenity. At its heart, this poem seems to conjure up several different concepts,

including loneliness and uncertainty, a small yet plaintive plea for empathy and approval.

In White's newest book, *Please Bury Me In This*, the form of her poems has changed drastically from that of her previous poems like "Waiting."

The poems in this book seem to lean closer to verse than prose, existing as singular lines, some fragmented, and each is separated from the other. The evolution of White's poetry seems to reflect her move towards darker, more tragic topics like death and suicide.

The shorter lines reflect the fragmented narratives that are often untold and seem to be almost holding back the full force of their emotions. For example, the first line of one of her poems, which is also its title, is "I am not any closer to saying what I mean."

The speaker's most interesting strength here is their ability to recognize that although writing may be a form of therapy, sometimes, as White also touched upon years ago in "Waiting," the emotions are too great to be put into words.



PUBLIC DOMAIN  
White's poetry connects images of ballerinas to those of a child floating.

VOICES

Here is the section where you can publish your unique thoughts, ideas and perspectives on life at Hopkins and beyond.

# Experiencing my first Thanksgiving ever



Amelia Isaacs  
From Across the Pond

Despite not really knowing exactly what to expect, I'll admit that my expectations for Thanksgiving were pretty high.

It seems to be the favorite holiday of the vast majority of Americans (I apologize if you are reading this as an American and wholeheartedly disagree with me, but just go with it). I had numerous people tell me that Thanksgiving would be my new favorite holiday once I had experienced it for the first time. Spoiler alert: Christmas is still my favorite holiday, but that's not really important.

Firstly, I was very surprised that we got a whole week off for Thanksgiving. Now don't get me wrong, I think it's great, and I am in no way complaining about having a week off school. Having said that, Thanksgiving break seems to come at a weird time to me. I understand that it's a holiday and therefore not scheduled around the lives of college or high school students, but it still seems pretty strange to me that we're back for just two more weeks of classes. I guess that's something I'll just have to get used to. Of course, I'm sure that as soon as I do, I'll be moving back home. *C'est la vie.*

So here's what too many American movies ("Happy Thanksgiving back," anyone?), commercials and Americans in general had led me to expect about Thanksgiving: way, way too much food, family, family drama, sports, more food and a sense of happiness and thankfulness.

Oh and a lot of sales afterwards, because what better way to follow a lovely day of being thankful than by spending a lot of money? Side note: We do have Black Friday in the U.K. now, but it's not anywhere near as big or as terrifying as it is here. In the U.K., we're very good at queueing and being passive aggressive, so we stick to that in times of stress.

So, how did a real American thanksgiving measure up? I have to say, I think it ticked off everything on my list.

There was a lot of food and, despite not being able to eat about half of it because of my many, many food allergies, I still feel like I could have put on the freshman 15 over thanksgiving break alone.

To be fair, the family that kindly invited me to spend

the holiday with them also had what seemed like their entire family over — a total of 23 people — so there needed to be a lot of food. That being said, I was not expecting there to be turkey, ham, other meats that I can't recall and approximately eight pies, amongst a wide array of other foods. I also tried cornbread for the first time.

That leads me to family. There were so many people that came over to the house for Thanksgiving and, even though it made me miss my own family just that little bit more, it was lovely.

It was so, so lovely to see family through the generations coming together to celebrate and just be around each other. That said, I challenge you to recount any time when a family has gathered together and there hasn't been some sort of drama.

I had numerous people tell me that Thanksgiving would be my new favorite holiday.

There was the drama of getting the giblets that got lost inside the turkey (which subsequently had to be taken out of the oven), the fact that a few family members turned up a few hours late (although I was told this was actually to be expected) and my friend's grandma questioning me on my thoughts about the Mayor of London (my thoughts were wrong, I found out), my religion and my relationship status.

As someone with only one grandparent who lives in Australia, who I've met just twice in my life, I think I got a lifetime's worth of grandparent-style questioning in just one evening. Given that it wasn't my family, I thought I would be able to avoid the grilling that I've heard people come to expect at Thanksgiving. I couldn't have been more wrong.

For some reason, though, I think this made me feel more at home. I was treated like part of the family, and I think that's partly what Thanksgiving is all about. I can't tell you the number of people who asked me where I was going over the holiday because "no one should be alone over Thanksgiving" and invited me to come stay with them. Even if people were just being nice to me because they felt sorry that I wasn't going back home, it was so nice to know that people cared.

What I've learnt through Thanksgiving, even if it hasn't become my favorite holiday, is that it is a time when Americans are even more open and hospitable and welcoming than usual. Every family has their own traditions, their own recipes and celebrations, and there is something so warming about being a part of that that I can't quite put into words. It's something that is quite foreign for British people, but it's something I love about this country, as cheesy as I know that sounds.

# The many failures from all my past cookouts



Sudgie Ma  
Bone Apple Tea

One of the things I look forward to most during every school break is getting back together with some of my close high school friends. Our get-togethers are almost always indoor "cookouts," and we spend the entire day (and night) struggling to make recipes, most of which are from Buzzfeed Tasty.

Yes, *struggling*. We'd be in the kitchen from noon to late at night, but at these cookouts, we only get four dishes done — tops. Usually, we'd have three or even less, if you don't count desserts or any meals with pre-made ingredients. This is all despite the fact that the recipes we used were all supposed to be simple.

For example, Buzzfeed Tasty's social media pages like to tout the simplicity of the brand's recipes by captioning or titling their videos with phrases like "One-Pot" or "Three-Ingredient Only." They cater to the demographic of millennials and young adults who just want to get some delicious food in their mouths with as little mess or clean-up as possible. The people who buy Tasty's recipe books are probably

not the type to pick up a cookbook authored by any Michelin-starred restaurant chefs. In other words, my friends and I are the perfect audience for these recipes.

So it's really a statement about our culinary skills that we can't even get Tasty recipes to work. One failure that's really stuck in my mind is from our very first cookout: The chosen recipe was a one-pot lemon pepper chicken with rice dish. We went through a great deal of effort just to gather all the necessary ingredients.

The recipe called for Arborio rice, and while most people probably would've just substituted whatever type of rice they had on hand for the recipe, we actually bounced from grocery store to grocery store to find that specific rice. We also spent extra money to buy a bottle of lemon pepper seasoning instead of just shaving some zest off of a lemon to go with normal black pepper.

But in the end, despite all the hard work that went into preparing all the ingredients, we still messed up the dish. It turns out that the chicken broth we used was too salty. We should've gotten low-sodium broth, but the recipe didn't note that, so we ended up dooming ourselves by following everything to the letter. The rice ended up absorbing so much flavor that it was difficult to eat without taking a huge gulp of water after every bite.

However, the lesson we learned from this failure didn't apply to all recipes: Often when we did go a little

off-script, it would end up just as detrimental.

Most recently, for my Friendsgiving cookout last Wednesday, one of the dishes we ended up butchering was falafel. I had been craving this dish in particular, because it's one of my favorite vegetarian foods. Falafel's texture is similar to meatballs, which I love, and it also happens to be extremely savory.

So it was somewhat disappointing to me when we ended up screwing up the recipe by blending the chickpea mixture enough to turn it into a puree (basically hummus at that point), instead of stopping at a place where we could still see chunks. It also didn't help that my friend's younger sister was a bit too eager to help out and squeezed an extra lemon's worth of juice into the blender. I'm a huge fan of hummus, so I still ate plenty of the end product, but I was looking to satisfy my particular falafel craving that day.

Looking back at all these cookouts, I now realize that we haven't made any suc-

cessful dishes completely from scratch.

Even cooking with extremely pre-made ingredients is sometimes a struggle. For example, baking with pre-made biscuit dough didn't end up too well for us when we tried it over the summer. The center of the baking pan ended up undercooked while the edges got burnt. There were spots of edible, delicious biscuit, but a good portion of it ended up a hot mess. Freezing yogurt to create yogurt bark was also a big failure, since it ended up unevenly frozen, and the parts that did freeze felt more like biting into chunks of ice than crispy bark.

But in the end, these failures are part of what make the cookouts fun. We're always on our toes to see if we actually do end up successful. Hopefully, none of us are ever in a position where we have to cook for others (or even ourselves) in the future. Cookout failures wouldn't be so fun in the future if we were actually depending on these meals to save ourselves from starvation.



PUBLIC DOMAIN  
Ma often cooks meals with her friends, though not always successfully.

# A couple of Thanksgiving, food-related facts to enjoy



Ariella Shua  
Internet Expeditions

Well, our much needed Thanksgiving break is officially over, and now we are all back in the swing of things, ready to take on the last few assignments before finals approach faster than anyone could have anticipated. In short: Welcome back, everyone!

As Thanksgiving break included what were probably the last stress-free days before the end of the semester, I decided to honor the occasion by putting off all of the work that I had to complete and chose to indulge in the food of the holiday instead. But I suppose I must have missed learning, be-

cause I couldn't just eat the food, I wanted to know more about what I was eating. At least I got some research done during the break.

Here are the questions and answers, helpfully provided by the internet, that I found more pressing than the questions my professors had assigned this week:

**Where did the flavor blue raspberry come from?**

This confused me to no end when I was younger: Why was blue raspberry a flavor at all? All other fruit-flavored candies got to keep their normal colors.

As it turns out, that was the problem that prompted blue raspberry to become a flavor in its own right. When ice pops started to be mass produced in the 1960s, raspberry, strawberry, cherry and watermelon flavored pops looked too similar to one another. The designers behind the ice pops began to dye each with a slightly different shade of red. Raspberry received the darkest shade, until the FDA banned Amaranth, the key ingredient in the dye, due

to troubling reactions from consumers. To keep from losing the raspberry flavor entirely, it was decided that the raspberry flavor would be matched with unused blue food dye. Years later, the flavor remains a standard in the candy industry.

**Which pie flavor was invented first?**

The short answer: meat pies. The long answer: Initially, everything cooked in an oven was a pie. Pies, originally made by the Romans, were intended to store a filling that was baked. The filling would be eaten, while the actual pie crust itself would not. By the 1100s, pies (then known as pyes) had made their way to England, usually with thick crusts containing a meat filling, often fowl. The crusts were known as coffyns (later coffin), as everything they held inside had been killed. It was not until the 1500s that sweeter pies were added to the repertoire.

**What is a berry?**

I never thought to question what a berry actually is, until I discovered that strawberries, blackberries and raspberries are not berries, while bananas are. What is a berry, if not the finger food of the fruit world?

The answer, it turns out, is that berries are fruits with a three-layer structure. The innermost structure contains the seeds — there must be at least two seeds — and the plant has to have only one flower and one ovary.

Culinary berries are often ruled out because of these distinctions: Cherries only

have one seed, for example.

Strangely, these rules also mean that many fruits that would never have considered berries are actually classified as such. Oranges, tomatoes and avocados all fall under the true berry category.

It should be noted that the word "berry" was initially used to refer to all fruits, not just the ones that adhere to the rules. Scientists are well aware that people confuse the current meaning of the word in almost every case. However, with much greater issues demanding attention, it is unlikely that the berry conundrum will be solved any time soon.

**Why do bagels have holes in them?**

The most important aspect of the bagel is also what makes the least sense from a consumer's perspective: Why would something with less dough be valued as better than regular bread? There are actually several reasons for the hole to be included. Round foods with holes are more inviting for children, who like to play with their food and have an easier time doing so if they can grab it, as the bagel allows them to do. The hole also lets bagels cook faster, something which was extremely important when bagels were being cooked and sold on the streets of New York City.

Relevant note: I'm from New Jersey, and bagels from the Tri-state area are objectively better than all other bagels. If you have not tried one, you are missing out.



STUDENT 150 | CC BY-SA 4.0  
The sweet pies we know were not a common type of pie until the late 1500s.

## Editorial

# Let's streamline how undergraduates find research opportunities

Hopkins frequently boasts about its status as "America's first research university." It's said every day by tour guides and splashed across promotional materials. People come away with the impression that finding research positions as an undergraduate is as easy as sending an email. That's not always the case.

Finding a research position is often a solitary and overwhelming task. The main way that many of us find research is by spending hours looking at faculty lists and emailing professors, hoping for a response.

Currently, only students whose majors require research are given a clear path to such opportunities. Outside of those majors, it can be difficult for students to even know what is available.

Additionally, when popular majors post research opportunities, so many people apply that the positions become incredibly competitive and out of reach for those without prior research experience.

This phenomenon highlights the Catch-22 that many students face. They can't get a research position without prior experience, but they can't get experience without a research position.

Additionally, no overarching entity exists to ensure that student researchers are treated fairly. Instead, students work at the discretion of their principal investigators (PIs) or

professors.

While we recognize that many students are happy in their positions, if there is ever a conflict no administrative resource exists to help students.

As Hopkins students, many of us are pursuing a vast array of research projects, whether it is analyzing the bone remains at a slave site in southern Maryland or designing medical devices. And those of us who aren't doing research want to take advantage of these opportunities.

Moreover, publishing or co-authoring a paper on your research can serve as a tangible reflection of all the time and energy put into a project. It can help many students who are interested in applying to graduate school or a professional research position.

Regardless of whether publishing a paper is the end goal, research is an invaluable learning experience for students and fundamentally intertwined with Hopkins as an institution.

Last spring, the University established the Hopkins Office for Undergraduate Research (HOUR) in order to help students find positions. However, we believe HOUR should be more aware of the challenges students face while pursuing research and do more to ease some of the stresses in the process.

The key problem many undergraduates face is simply figuring out what opportunities are out there. HOUR can serve as a connecting point for both students and researchers.

Their office can look to Student Employment Services (SES) as a model and create a portal that lists available research positions in the same way that SES lists all the jobs available on campus.

This portal would serve as a two-way street, connecting students with researchers in need of assistants, and would make HOUR a much more beneficial resource. We know that this model works because a few researchers already list opportunities on the SES portal.

We also believe HOUR could help demystify the publication process. Oftentimes, the only resources available to interested students are other students who have already been published.

We acknowledge it may be harder to find research in some field than in others. The fact of the matter is that there are fewer undergraduate research opportunities in the humanities.

Yet, we do not want that fact to dissuade students. We have renowned humanities departments and archival resources like Special Collections where students can do their own original research. HOUR can help connect students to those resources.

We encourage the University and HOUR to continue bridging the gap between students who want to participate in research and the opportunities available to them. Let's make sure that students have a clear path to the research they came here to do.

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## LETTERS & OP-ED POLICY

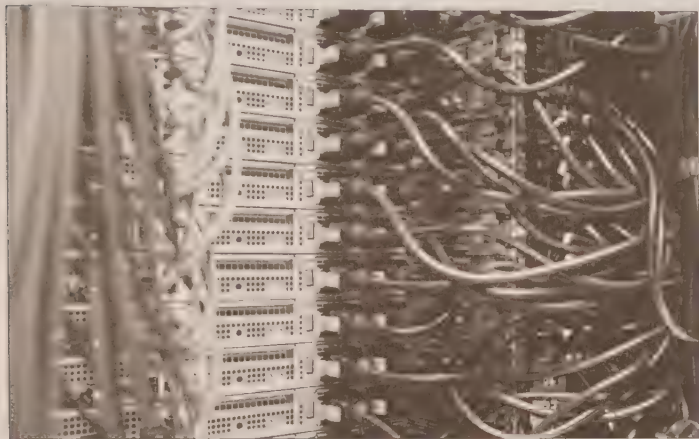
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# OPINIONS

*With the exception of editorials, the opinions expressed here are those of the contributors. They are not necessarily those of The Johns Hopkins News-Letter.*

## Voting against net neutrality is not in the public's interest



VICTORGRIGAS/CC BY-SA 3.0

The Federal Communications Commission will vote to repeal net neutrality rules on Dec. 7.

By SAMUEL FARRAR

After two years of constant debate, on the Tuesday over Thanksgiving break, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) finally released its plans to repeal the Obama-era net neutrality rules enacted in 2015. This decision may be the most damaging to the American consumer in this nation's history.

The regulations that will likely be repealed on Dec. 7 classified the internet as a public utility, giving it the same protections as the water or electricity industries. The impetus of this was to protect consumers and companies from "pay-to-play" fast lanes. Fast lanes are a method of prioritizing connection speed for one service over another. In a pay-to-play system, only companies that could afford to pay a premium to an internet service provider (ISP) would be able to access the fast connection, while other companies' speeds would be artificially slowed down.

While ISPs would still not be legally allowed to fully block content from a user, fast lanes would give them the ability to accomplish the same goal. Let's use Netflix as an example. The average connection speed in the U.S. is just under 19 Mbps (megabits per second), and on campus it usually hovers around 160 Mbps. Netflix requires 5 Mbps to stream HD content smoothly.

At just a tenth of that speed, consumers might not even be able to access the website at all. Obviously, at some point, a speed would be so slow it could only be seen as censoring. The problem is, a tenth of the speed is still within precedent. ISPs could theoretically throttle down to dial up speeds, or 1/10,000th of the speed necessary for Netflix.

Defenders of the FCC's decision claim it would not be in an ISP's interest to limit lanes like this, as it would only turn customers away, and it is thus very unlikely to happen. However, fast lanes give ISPs the ability to monopolize the internet industry with frightening efficiency.

Continuing with the Netflix example, many ISPs already have their own streaming service or are a part of a conglomerate that owns one. Thus, it would be in their interest to throttle all the competition, leaving their service as the only one in the market. Controlling a product as well as the way the overall market of products gets to the consumer is a form of monopoly not seen before.

The alternative for companies, as mentioned above, is to pay premiums to ISPs in exchange for high-speed connection to the consumer. The companies forced to comply would inevitably have to turn around and increase their service's price. More so than paid services, pay-to-play hurts non-profits

and advertisement-based revenue sites. For non-profits, the implications are obvious. Without a revenue system designed for anything beyond sufficiency, they would struggle to continue their presence online with the extra, most likely immense, fast lane costs.

Advertisement-based sites would face a complex snowballing situation that would most likely force them to become paid services. The combination of the extra costs for the advertisers, as well as a diminished reach due to a disappearing number of websites, would drastically drop the revenue a website would receive from an advertisement. This, combined with their own fast lane access costs would either force the site into a pay service or force them to plaster their site with ads to the point where it is not usable. Either of these options would most likely kill the website.

More at risk than any of these examples are startups. Only large, established companies would be able to afford the new fast lane costs. Startups would have no chance in this market. They do not have the ability to spend large portions of their funding on securing fast lane access. Google, Microsoft and Amazon, now the titans of the internet, would not have been able to survive without their free access to the web as startups. Innovation, the core identity of the internet, would not just be stifled. It would disappear.

It is important to note that this is not a partisan issue. Net neutrality has had more bipartisan support than anything else I have experienced in my, albeit short, lifetime. This year, the FCC received over 20 million messages in defense of net neutrality.

In July of this year, according to Freedman Consulting, 77 percent of Americans supported net neutrality, and 81 percent opposed pay-to-play fast lanes. The actions of FCC chairman Ajit Pai, as well as the two other Republicans on the commission who are predicted to vote in favor this December, reveal a complete disregard for the American people.

Furthermore, majority leader of the senate Mitch McConnell and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan have expressed support for repealing net neutrality, along with many other republicans. There seems to be no opposition on Capitol Hill strong enough to stop this reversal. While it technically remains to be voted on, there is no doubt that net neutrality is already dead.

Before the 2018 midterm elections, more damage will have been done than can be fixed. Over the coming months, as the process of repeal progresses, our public officials will reveal where their priorities lie: their party or the American people; corporations or their constituency.

*Samuel Farrar is a freshman from Brevard, N.C. He plans to major in political science.*

## What role should safe spaces play on campus?

By TIANCHENG LYU

In recent years, the concept of "safe spaces" has become an integral part of conversations on college campuses across the U.S. Originally coined to help educational institutions resist forms of harassment and hate speech against the LGBTQ community, the term has taken on much broader connotations. Now a "safe space" generally refers to a place or a forum where marginalized individuals gather to share their experiences without having to feel uncomfortable or discriminated against.

The controversy surrounding "safe spaces" further escalated when, last fall, the University of Chicago welcomed its incoming freshman class with a message declaring that "[the University does] not condone the creation of intellectual 'safe spaces' where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own."

As an international student from China, I attended a boarding school in Massachusetts before coming to Hopkins. During the past four years, I've been exposed to a wide spectrum of ideas like intersectional feminism, micro-aggression and safe spaces.

Upon my arrival in the U.S., I genuinely enjoyed learning more about these "progressive" concepts. I also tried to become well-versed in terminologies such as "marginalization," "trigger warning" and "privilege." When I used these words in conversations, people sometimes snapped their fingers and even nodded their heads in acknowledgement. In those moments, I felt progressive. Even more, I felt American.

Nevertheless, in the past few years, I began to question the extent to which conversations about

"safe spaces" are really making me progress as an individual, in addition to us as a community.

Recently, when I've wanted to make a comment or pose a question in the FFC or in the classroom, I've found myself held back by a solemn voice in my head: Am I unintentionally making this into a "brave space"? As opposed to "safe space," "brave space" is a place where some might have to step out of their comfort zones and be "brave" in order to voice their opinions regarding their marginalized identities.

Should I bring up the conflict between "Black Lives Matter" and "All Lives Matter" when there are people of African-American descent present? As a straight person, am I too internally biased to comment on issues related to queer people?

How can I talk about feminism as a man without causing any micro-aggression? And am I, someone from another country, eligible to judge U.S. issues, with the country's long, distinct history of civil struggles for equality?

We need to talk about this. For me, Hopkins is progressive not only because it challenges its students to think outside of box academically but also because it engages people with different, and sometimes opposite, opinions in constructive conversations with each other. I believe that we are all minorities in one way or another. And I definitely agree that the University needs to provide physical and emotional "safe spaces" for those in need. Nevertheless, at times I do feel obliged to silence my own voice in order to provide an intellectual and seemingly "safe space" for others.

I also admit that there exist many radical, derogatory speeches we should look out for. However,

we need to draw a line between offensive commentary and unintentional mistakes made by someone less informed on the issue. "Safe space" isn't a shelter for people with unusual thoughts or a shield for those unwilling to listen to opinions different from their own.

In fact, a good argument has to be disagreeable in nature. If I am wrong, correct me. That's how we move along. Progress is made by creative destruction. We destroy outdated beliefs in favor of new, better ones. It's especially crucial for an international student like me to learn more about this country and its culture by discussing topics that might seem "uncomfortable."

Ironically, below the tranquil surface of the "safe space" we're floating upon in daily conversations at the University, there seem to be undercurrents of messages boarding on the edge of being really offensive that manifest themselves in forms of jokes between friends as well as memes on various social media platforms.

And I myself am no exception to these types of bad humor. I've laughed at many inappropriate memes. Therefore, it's even more important for us to find another outlet for this frustration, shared by many, for the so-called "political correctness." And we do so by talking. Don't shut off the start of a meaningful conversation by using the words "safe space."

After all, "safe space" doesn't equal comfort zone. While feeling emotionally safe, we all need to discuss important issues out of our comfort zone. And we just need two things to accomplish this: a person to start the conversation and two or more attentive ears.

*Tiancheng Lyu is a freshman who plans to major in Writing Seminars. He is from Hangzhou, China.*

## Free speech is a vital part of social progress

By RACHEL FORTINSKY & MICHAEL LEFF

June 15, 1215: King John of England signs the Great Charter of Liberties (Magna Carta) guaranteeing rights and privileges to all free men.

December 6, 1865: Slavery is abolished, and approximately three million men, women and children are freed by the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

July 9, 1868: Equal protection is enshrined as a bedrock of American law in the 14th Amendment, which later leads to historic rulings such as *Mapp v. Ohio*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Gideon v. Wainwright* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

August 18, 1920: Women are enfranchised and, just a few months after the 19th Amendment is ratified, more than eight million women exercise their right to vote for the very first time.

These are just few examples of how ideas that were once anathema later became foundations of western civilization and democracy. For many of these ideas, opposition was taken for granted for most of human history. Even when such a position was challenged, particularly in regards to slavery and women's rights, it took centuries of criticism and loud disapproval until real change was made. These ideas gained momentum because their proponents had the freedom and tenacity to express them.

It is because of the expression of diverging views that we live in a society of remarkably more social and political progress than that of 200 years ago. Openness to new ideas paved the way for progress, and the same holds true today.

Interestingly enough, however,

a growing number of people are adopting the opposite approach. For the sake of social progress and harmony, they argue, we must restrict ideas considered to be extreme from entering public discourse. Ideas must be suppressed to achieve societal progress.

However, minority opinions — including offensive ones — deserve to be tolerated (even if not accepted). Restricting those views from being heard is a dangerous path that we can not afford to take.

While radical ideas needn't develop into mainstream thought, restricting the free speech of those who express such views deprives us of the ability to engage honestly and fully with those positions.

Restricting expression of those critiques is the first step toward an intellectually moribund and morally bankrupt society. Such fringe opinions, though often of little apparent value, offer us the opportunity to engage with fundamental critiques of our society. Even if we find those critiques flawed, ideas and the followings that they develop are often reflective of particular social, economic or religious phenomena.

While the position itself might not have merit, its suppression likewise acts as an unhealthy masking of potentially problematic issues in our social fabric. Adopting a system that allows those in charge to restrict ideas that are merely "considered" offensive leaves the majority with a dangerous amount of discretionary power over the minority. We must recognize that the opinions of those who are few in number

are not fundamentally less valuable or true than those who swim in the mainstream. But beyond this, we must create a system that can function consistently, without relying on the discretion of any particular person or group's opinion. This system must recognize the same rules for friends as well as foes.

It seems fairly obvious why banning a figure like Richard Spencer from the public arena is a good idea. He spouts abhorrent rhetoric, racist propaganda, ill-founded conspiracy theories, and he is blatantly anti-Semitic. Why then should we allow him a platform to promulgate his garbage?

But let's put the shoe on the other foot: Richard Spencer, though odious, must have the freedom to speak, just like a gay rights advocate in that small rural town. Those who object to this sentiment favoring suppression of speech would

be the same people prohibiting abolitionists in the 1800s, women's rights advocates in the early 1900s and same sex marriage advocates just a few years ago from spreading their messages.

We must welcome the hard truths that freedom exposes and embrace the progress it ushers in. The American people have thrived on diversity of thought for almost 250 years, and it is our duty to preserve an environment open to all ideas and views.

*Rachel Fortinsky is a freshman neuroscience major from Westchester, N.Y. Michael Leff is a freshman majoring in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering. He is from Highland Park, N.J.*

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YOUR WEEKEND • ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT • CARTOONS, ETC. • SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY • SPORTS

NOVEMBER 30, 2017



## Arts & Entertainment

Gerwig's *Lady Bird* beautifully depicts a teenager's growth — B3  
Experiencing the wonders of London's Tate Modern Gallery — B4  
Rock bands Slowdive and Cherry Glazerr perform in Baltimore — B5



## Science & Technology

Astronomers discover new earth-like planet, Ross 128 b — B7  
How a sheep disease sparked research in genetics — B8  
Video games may be used to measure intelligence — B9



## Sports

W. Soccer loses out in the NCAA Elite Eight round — B12  
M. Basketball continues stellar season undefeated — B10  
W. Cross Country wins NCAA Championship title once again — B11

# YOUR WEEKEND NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 3

## Events in Baltimore this weekend

### Thursday

#### Pro-Choice Happy Hour R. House, 7 p.m. — 11 p.m.

Join R. House in enjoying pro-choice themed cocktails at a fundraising event. A percentage of sales will go toward the Baltimore Abortion Fund. The event will also feature the talents of the bar's female staff. 21+.

### Friday

#### Christmas Village in Baltimore West Shore Park, 11 a.m. — 8 p.m.

Enjoy the crafts and foods of Baltimore's very own German Christmas market. Come for the Ho Ho Happy Hour and stay for the live entertainment and Bratwurst-eating contest. There's something for everyone.

### Square Dance

#### The Ideal Arts Space, 7:30 p.m. — 11 p.m.

No experience is necessary to enjoy this pastime. Come to enjoy the live country music, or join in on the fun! Whether you're new to square dancing or a pro, all will have a good time. Entrance fee for students is \$7.

### Saturday

### Casually Dope

#### The BIG Theater, 7 p.m. — 8 p.m.

Listen to casual comedy about your community, presented by Casually Dope. While laughter is guaranteed, you are also more than likely to learn something new about your fellow citizens of Baltimore. \$5.

### The 24th Night of 100 ElvisES

#### Lord Baltimore Hotel, 4 p.m. — 1 a.m.

There will be three stages and approximately 100 Elvises or bands performing Elvis songs. What more do you need to know? But if that's not enough, there will also be oysters and hot rods and beehives, oh my! Tickets start at \$57.

### Sunday

### 4th Annual Winter Craft Fair

#### Baltimore Free Farm, 3 p.m. — 8 p.m.

Come enjoy the crafts of over 20 vendors, all by the comfort of a wood stove. See the best crafts that Baltimore has to offer while enjoying the complimentary refreshments.

## Take advantage of the Science Center's Dollar Days

By RENEE SCAVONE  
Your Weekend Editor

With finals nearly upon us, it can be hard to remember to take time to do things that we enjoy. While the Hopkins work ethic of spending three days straight on A-level and talking about how stressed you are may seem seductive, giving your brain a break actually boosts your ability to meaningfully take in information. At least, it prevents you from going all Nicholson in *The Shining*.

Luckily, next weekend provides a number of wonderful break-time options, as it is once again time for Baltimore's Dollar (or less) Days. In general, these are worth taking advantage of, and they work exactly as you might think: On select dates, there are special deals and cool events throughout the city for, you guessed it, a dollar or less.

One particularly hype deal? The Maryland Science Center.

Remember when science was fun? Before orgo, lab write ups and Panopto? Remember when you told people you wanted to major in neuroscience and their reactions were "Good for you!" and not "Oh, I'm so sorry."

Maybe I'm just a huge nerd, but there's something so nice about being able to view the results of an experiment, think about

how cool it is and then never have to worry about it destroying my GPA. The Maryland Science Center is great for that kind of thing.

One of my favorite attractions currently at the Center is their dinosaur exhibit. Admittedly, it has elements like dig pits that are clearly geared toward young children, but I for one would definitely elbow a fourth grader out of the way for the chance to touch a triceratops skull. There are also dozens of articulated skeletons and other cool setups. So if you were super into *Jurassic World*, this is your place.

Similarly, though many of the exhibits have child-appropriate aspects, there are interesting facts and displays for all. *Follow the Blue Crab* explores the Chesapeake Bay and its importance to Maryland's ecosystem. It's super interesting and incredibly pertinent in today's political climate.

The exhibit also boasts a giant, mechanical crab. The Center refers to it as their legacy. I actually think it's kind of terrifying.

*Newton's Alley* is the Center's physics exhibit, and apparently it's their most popular attraction. I barely passed Physics 1 in high school and therefore cannot possibly tell you if it's actually interesting or if I'm still "just more of a bio person."



PUBLIC DOMAIN

You can get to the Science Center using the Circulator's Purple Route.

(Spoiler alert... probably the latter.)

Either way, it's fun in a sort of mindless way. Sure, you may be designing rockets back at school, but here's a chance to play one of those stringless harps.

Furthermore, traveling exhibits come in and out of the Center as well. One of my favorites was an exposé on drug use and manufacturing — from the production of cocaine by poor Colombian farmers to the effect that meth lab explosions have on Americans. The whole thing was very interesting and was definitely geared toward an adult audience.

The Maryland Science Center exists in the borderlands between the Inner Harbor and Federal Hill. You can get there by taking

the Charm City Circulator's Purple Route to its stop on Lee Street.

If you're not totally sold on the Science Center, there are a number of other Dollar Days events going on. Just four quarters will get you into Baltimore's Christmas Village, the National Aquarium, the Great Blacks in Wax Museum and more. You can also check out the American Visionary Arts Museum and live holiday music at Lexington Market for free on Saturday.

Finals are tough, but it's important to take a moment or two to enjoy Baltimore before you head home for break. Discover a new favorite place to unwind and have fun, and it'll be all the more easy to return to Hopkins (and Hopkins academics) in the spring.

## The top four spookiest places to visit in Baltimore

By GENEVIEVE THOMAS  
For *The News-Letter*

Thanksgiving has come and gone, and so we shed our first semester angst in exchange for winter holiday angst. You're cold, you're really stressed, and you're trying to choose a major.

But nobody has invented an app that lets you input all your courses and then tells you what major you're closest to fulfilling so you can graduate early and become a "consultant," whatever that means.

Someone please make that app, by the way.

To add insult to injury, the best holiday of the year (Halloween) is now an entire month behind us. The worst of the seasons has arrived, so what better time than now to review the top four spookiest places in Baltimore.

**Number four:** The Horse You Came In On Saloon

I love a place whose name is an inside joke between most people, excluding me. It's either that or it just plain

goes over my head. It sounds cool anyway.

(Pro tip: The locals just refer to it as "The Horse." Don't be a tourist.)

Built in 1775, there's no way this place isn't haunted. As every old place in Baltimore advertises, Edgar Allan Poe used to go here. As not that many old places in Baltimore can say, this was the last place he went before his mysterious, naked death. After a few rounds of drinks, who am I to tell you that you won't see his ghost? He's a spooky dude, so this adds to the overall spook factor.

The Horse is accessible by the Charm City Circulator in Fell's Point, which means you can justify any Halloween weekend tomfoolery in that neighborhood as historically accurate.

**Number three:** Fort McHenry

Erected on the site of the former Fort Whetstone, a place that was already old and therefore probably haunted, Fort McHenry was built between 1798 and 1800.

In 1814, the soldiers defending McHenry from the British inspired Francis Scott Key to write what eventually became "The Star-Spangled Banner," also known as the national anthem of the United States of America.

Riddled with history, something this aged and controversial can't not be full of spirits with unfinished business. A deadly flu epidemic in 1919 is responsible for even more death here, which probably explains the common sighting of ghostly nurses walking the halls.

There are also fun ghostly screams that allegedly come from the dungeons, if dungeons aren't already scary enough.

My preferred way to get there is via the Water Taxi from the Inner Harbor, a trip worth making no matter where you're going.

**Number two:** Westminster Hall and Burying Ground

It would be extremely predictable to end a spooky list with a cemetery, which is why this is number two.

The Burying Ground has all the usual features of a cemetery: dead human bodies in the ground, spooky, it's also allegedly haunted by folks who died during the War of 1812.

Furthermore, it's the eternal resting place of our old pal Poe, in case you thought for a second that a list about haunted things in Baltimore could go more than 10 paragraphs without mentioning him.

You can get to Westminster by taking the Purple Route to Fayette Street and walking west until you get to a giant former Presbyte-

rian church. Now, on to the less expected...

**Number one:** USS Constellation

In every scary movie, the protagonist starts to realize something is up, goes to call the cops and realizes she's got no cell service. For some probably supernatural reason, this boat is also a dead zone, so you can't call the Coast Guard and tell them about the ghosts eating you.

If being on a haunted ship that has seen and abetted death from the Civil War to World War Two isn't spooky enough, they offer an overnight adventure program where you get to be scared for an entire night. Added spook: Tickets are only \$13.

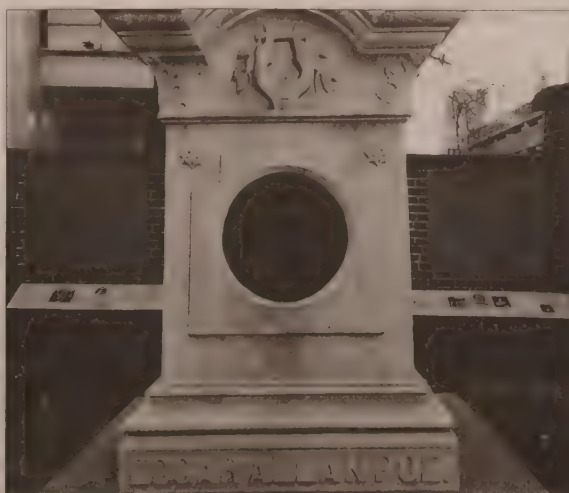
**Honorable mention that nobody will ever go to because it's super far:** Glenn Dale Hospital

We're talking about an *American Horror Story*-style abandoned (closed) tuberculosis sanatorium. There is a plethora of alleged stories about tortured patients and secret tunnels probably used for more torturing of patients.

If I had a car, I might take the 895 out of town to go steal a no trespassing sign from there. I probably wouldn't actually trespass, though, because I'm too scared (and also asbestos).

Either way, if half of the urban legends I've heard are true, Glenn Dale puts the other places on this list to shame. Reach out if you go; I'll tag along.

So take a break from not studying this December and maybe go get yourself haunted. Next time, I'll follow up with Baltimore's top four exorcists.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Edgar Allen Poe's grave is located at the Westminster Hall and Burying Ground.

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## Lady Bird is one of the year’s strongest films



Saoirse Ronan played the titular character in Greta Gerwig’s directorial debut Lady Bird.

By **LUIS CURIEL**  
For *The News-Letter*

In a year where we, as an audience, have been treated to some spectacular directorial debuts in the form of Jordan Peele’s horror film *Get Out* and Tyler Sheridan’s thriller *Wind River*, it is only suitable that the next big name directorial debut is also an incredible work of art.

*Lady Bird* premiered at the Telluride Film Festival on Sept. 1. Immediately afterwards, Twitter lit up. Praise came from everyone, giving Greta Gerwig — star of *Frances Ha* and *Mistress America* — immense props for her screenplay and direction, as well as love for Saoirse Ronan’s performance as the titular Lady Bird.

As a fan of Gerwig’s films (*Frances Ha* is one of my all-time favorites), my excitement for this film was through the roof. Luckily, over the holidays I was able to hit up my local indie-film theater and watch the best film of 2017.

*Lady Bird* follows Christine “Lady Bird” McPherson through her senior year at a Catholic high school in Sacramento, Calif. Lady Bird’s biggest desire is to go to a college on the east coast, where “culture” can be found.

However, her family’s financial situation makes it difficult for her dream to come true. Additionally, Lady Bird’s grades make it highly unlikely she’ll be accepted to college.

We get to see Lady Bird go through a variety of emotional experiences throughout the school year: her first heartbreak, her first time having sex and her search for her own identity. All of this occurs in a collision course with her mother, who is constantly at odds with Lady Bird.

In what can only be described as an all too real, visceral performance from Laurie Metcalf, who plays Mrs. McPherson, an already fantastic performance from Ronan is elevated to a whole different level. The frustrations, the love and the inevitable sadness that comes with being the parent of someone who comes off as ungrateful are all beautifully portrayed by Metcalf, allowing the audience to empathize with her.

The rest of the young cast is not to be left behind. Lucas Hedges (*Manchester By The Sea*) plays Danny O’Neill, the theater kid who Lady Bird first falls for. Hedges gets a chance to show his range in this film, where, similarly to Ronan, he plays a character who is struggling with

his own identity. He does a fantastic job and serves as an indirect foil to *Call Me By Your Name*’s Timothée Chalamet, who plays Kyle Scheible.

Kyle is effortlessly cool, something that Chalamet’s natural charisma only augments. He’s the guy who can say “that’s hell a tight” with a straight face. Never seen without his copy of Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*, Chalamet’s character feels like the kid in high school who thinks that the only problems that matter are the ones that affect the world as a whole. It’s a piece of commentary that tells us that it’s okay to focus on our own problems before we start worrying about the world’s.

Rounding out the young cast is Beanie Feldstein who plays Lady Bird’s best friend, Julie. Her relationship with Lady Bird, as the latter tries to play up to her rich boyfriend — the aforementioned Kyle — and his friends, may become

tropes; she embraces them and executes them with such precision that you marvel at them. The dialogue throughout the film doesn’t feel wasteful or artificial. The emotional beats all feel earned, and the soundtrack elevates these moments.

Featuring perhaps the best use of Justin Timberlake’s “Cry Me a River,” (which Gerwig secured via an endearing personal letter to Timberlake himself) and songs from the Dave Matthews Band, the soundtrack accentuates certain scenes and reminds you how “high school” all of it really is.

That is up until the final minutes of the film, in which we get to experience Lady Bird’s first days at college. This is also incredibly familiar. It’s a place that’s entirely different for our main character and one that causes her to gravitate to the things she knows the best.

I’m sure that this experience won’t only resonate

with people our age, but is also the exact situation some of us found ourselves in. Who’s music taste hasn’t been picked apart by a random stranger you met on a night out?

The film is an apology of sorts to our parents, particularly to our mothers, the ones who have to deal with all of the shit that we do throughout high school. They frustrate us, but they love us, or at least they say they do.

A huge insecurity at that age, at least with respect to our parents, is perfectly illustrated with one piece of dialogue: “Do you like me?” It’s a relatable question. At an age when you want to forget the past but are fearful of what the future holds, you want to make sure that the people you love aren’t hurt by your actions.

The scene is one of the most subtly emotional parts of the film, one that isn’t afraid to show emotions in a bombastic way.

Gerwig’s directorial debut is perfect in every way. She captures the feeling of being a female teenager on the verge of adulthood in ways that haven’t been seen before. She shows us that she has a strong grasp of both humor and drama.

Gerwig’s collaborations with filmmaker Noah Baumbach have only refined her skills, and I hope she gets more opportunities to be creative in Hollywood.

As for *Lady Bird*, catch it grabbing an Oscar Nomination for Best Picture (among others) in a year featuring many strong independent films.

## Internet radio sets you on the path to discovery

By **NIKITA SHTARKMAN**  
For *The News-Letter*

There are few things better than finding new, good music. There is something adventurous, exciting and even daring about listening to an artist or song you haven’t heard before. But how does one find new music?

Usually doing so takes time. Whether you’re clicking through a deep rabbit hole of YouTube suggestions, digging around obscure SoundCloud pages or actually rifling through crates at a record store, you’re spending precious time you may not always have.

Sometimes it is easier to go about finding new music the old way — through DJs and curators. Here are a few of my favorite online resources that provide consistent, quality recs.

Soulection Radio mixes are some of the best collections of music out there. Soulection is a record label with some exceptional artists. Their roster includes talented new age producers like Monte Booker, Sam Gellaitry, and J. Robb. Besides the albums their artists produce and release, Soulection is primarily known for its weekly signature radio show.

The show is spearheaded by the owner of the label, Joe Kay. Soulection has a fairly broad style, encompassing a wide array of genres, though there is an emphasis on music with a heavy low-end, groovy drums and sample chopping. Great artists like Kaytranada, Sango and esta. were all featured on the show early in their careers.

The broadcasts are two hours long, with dozens upon dozens of great tracks back to back. Sometimes, the two hours are broken up by guest mixes and interviews with artists.

I have only one problem with Soulection: There is a pervading and tangible arrogance that permeates all aspects of the label. The tagline itself — “The Sound of Tomorrow” — is a prime example of their pretension.

Joe Kay, while a truly good DJ and curator, is almost unbearably full of himself and somehow manages to turn every interview from being about the artist to being about himself. This is a minor issue, but it is definitely something that can be annoying.

Sometimes the name of a show says more than any description of it can. Such

is the case with “Stay Inside” with Earl Sweatshirt and Knxwledge.

Underground producer Knxwledge teams up with master rapper Earl to create heavy mixes perfectly tailored to late nights spent inside.

The shows are lo-fi, grimy and gritty. The usual track selections include dark, menacing New York rap records, heavily chopped and altered vocals over lush loops and an R&B or soul track here and there.

Overall the tone is dark and introspective; this is music that you listen to in silence in a shuttered, hazy room. The tempo is slow and meandering, silence is used to great effect.

These mixes don’t make much sense during summer, when you feel the overwhelming urge to enjoy the outside world. But with the coming onslaught of winter, these mixes will feel far more fitting.

Earl and Knxwledge barely talk, only chiming in occasionally with nonsensical comments or some random quick banter. When they do speak, it is hilarious and fits with the music perfectly.

Sometimes they’ll plaster their voices with heavy reverb or distortion and mumble gibberish before getting back to the music. I highly recommend these mixes to anyone who enjoys hip-hop.

There is a lot of music played here that is underrated and underappreciated. Artists like Ka, Roc Marciano and Westside Gunn are all prominently featured.

blonded RADIO has the most diverse mixes of the bunch. This is Frank Ocean’s Beats 1 radio set. It is hosted by Vegyn, a London-based producer and frequent Ocean collaborator, London-based DJ Roof Access and Federico Aliprandi, an Italian car enthusiast.

The song selections for each episode are wildly diverse, ranging from beautiful Gospel arrangements, to Latin and Italian music and back to hip-hop, jazz and pop.

Take the second episode, for example: The playlist starts with “St. Martin de Porres,” a gorgeous, eerie, religious piece, and somehow transitions to indie pop, then bouncy tracks from Thundercat, J Dilla and UGK, before finally ending up at Frank’s worldwide release of “Chanel” — quite a lot of leaps without feeling at all disjointed or

SEE DISCOVER, PAGE B5

## Jadakiss and Fabolous live on as icons



Brooklyn rapper Fabolous teams up with Jadakiss on Friday on Elm Street.

By **WILL KIRSCH**  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

The late 1990s and early 2000s were an interesting time for hip-hop. Labels like Bad Boy, G-Unit and Ruff Ryders had essentially come to define the New York sound, which had become far more melodic and polished.

The city’s distinct style was far from gone, but the years of Mobb Deep’s piano-driven hellscapes or early RZA’s foreboding kung-fu fantasy worlds had passed.

The themes of the lyrics, though, mostly stayed the same. Hardcore hip-hop had not gotten any softer with the addition of bells, whistles and R&B hooks. Animosity between artists still involved guns, and disses were still sent via the radio.

In this context, rappers such as Jadakiss and Fabolous rose to fame, coming up through the golden age

and segueing seamlessly into the new sound. Now these two New York titans have come together on their new album, *Friday on Elm Street*.

I was so ready to make a Def Jam: Icon joke, but apparently neither of them are characters in the game so \*shrugs\*.

Jadakiss got his start as one third of the Yonkers-based trio, the LOX. Alongside LOX members Styles P and Sheek Louch, Jada rose to fame after signing first to Bad Boy and then to Ruff Ryders.

After producing two albums with the LOX — *Money, Power & Respect* and *We Are the Streets* — Jada released his solo debut, *Kiss Tha Game Goodbye*, in 2001 through Ruff Ryders and Interscope. Since then, he has released three additional solo albums and an insane number of features.

Fabolous was lifted to

fame after freestyling on DJ Clue’s Hot 97 radio show. Clue eventually signed Fabolous to his label Desert Storm Records. He released his first studio album, *Ghetto Fabolous*, through Desert Storm in 2001.

Not so fun fact: The actual day that his debut was released was Sept. 11, or, as it is now known, 9/11. Despite this, Fab’s first album was a commercial success, and he went on to make five more studio albums, as well as several mixtapes and EPs.

In their own individual right, each rapper became known for their lyrical expertise — Jada for rugged criminal anecdotes and Fab for fanciful tales of wealth and power.

It was really only a matter of time until they collaborated and, on Nov. 24, the stars finally aligned. After a two year wait, the pair released their near-mythic and long awaited album.

Originally supposed to be called “Freddy vs. Jason” (like the incredibly shitty horror movie) the project was released as *Friday on Elm Street*, like the portmanteau of the two non-shitty horror movies.

This is a big deal for anyone who likes New York rap; arguably the city’s two most talented rappers, both of whom kept the sound alive through the changing

SEE FRIDAY, PAGE B4



Rapper Earl Sweatshirt co-hosts a Red Bull Radio show with Knxwledge.

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

# New York rap legends debut their collab album

FRIDAY. FROM B3  
times, were finally fighting tag-team on the same album.

This is an extremely New York album. There's a French Montana hook, a Styles P verse and two Swizz Beatz tracks; each song privileges flow over beats, although the latter are occasionally a perfect synthesis of grit and gaudiness.

Somehow Jadakiss is even still rapping about crack. There's also a five-percenter reference, which is sure to irritate some of my fellow white devils.

Both Fabolous and Jadakiss have a talent for adapting to an evolving genre. While some older rappers tend to talk shit from the sidelines, Fab and Jada consciously update their references.

Such evolution has proved difficult in hip-hop, which (perhaps more than any genre) is full of people obsessed with "the old school."

But it's 2017; Jadakiss no longer wears a bubble jacket all year long; Fabolous isn't using a paper towel as a bandana. The times have changed, and these two New York icons have changed with them.

With songs like "Talk About It," the duo show that they're not uncomfortable in the present. "Stand Up," the album's lead single, even has a Future chorus, so this shit is official.

However, this is not a purely contemporary album. The sound is consciously pegged in the late '90s, early '00s era of New York hip-hop. I mean, there's two songs worth of Swizz Beatz saying "God dammit," which is the sonic equivalent of... something New York-y. Yellow cabs? Timbs? Giuliani? I don't know.

One of the best songs on the album is the Swizz-produced and featured "Theme Music." Like I said, the Swizz feature and production defines the track as a conscious reference to the past. This is hardly a bad thing, as a meeting of icons rarely is. The somewhat antiquated sound still works; it

feels fresh, but Lonzo Ball would hate it.

Friday does, in my opinion, have a decidedly southern tint in its production, which is exasperated by features from Jeezy and Yo Gotti on the "Stand Up" remix.

Personally, I think that the album would have been better if it had stayed regional; the Ruff Ryders produced tracks are easily the best, especially when compared to the relatively formulaic beat of "Stand Up."

I mean, just think about it; an album full of Ruff Ryders production would have been catnip for older men in Yankee fitteds — or 21-year-old newspaper editors with speculative nostalgia. Side note: Fuck the Yankees. You got lucky beating Cleveland.

But part of evolving is following trends, and that means looking to producers like the Reazy Renegade, who has worked with artists like DJ Khaled and French Montana.

Renegade only produced one track ("Stand Up"), but most of the beats adhere to that sort of unexciting but crowd-pleasing style which DJs like Renegade create.

Friday on Elm Street is, in essence, a good album. Despite some less than exciting beats, Jada and Fab shine both individually and as a team and really, that's all that matters.

This album is all about lyricism and on that front, it delivers. These two are still some of the most talented rappers in New York, and on Friday they prove that.

Honestly though, this should be a one-and-done kind of thing. Essential to this project was the hype that preceded it; people wanted these two to collaborate and the maybe, maybe-not question made the release all the more exciting.

If they were to do it again, it seems unlikely that a second album would be received the same way. So let's all just content ourselves with this. Unless these two make an album with DMX. That would be awesome.

# Murder on the Orient Express satisfies audiences



MELINDA SECKINGTON/CC BY 2.0  
Kenneth Branagh both directed and starred in *Murder on the Orient Express*.

By COLE DOUGLASS  
For *The News-Letter*

At their core, murder mysteries are rarely about murders. Sure, somebody will die. There will be a crime scene and clues and a culprit, but at the end of the day, those don't really matter.

Mysteries are about people. Without an interesting cast of suspects and, most importantly, an engaging detective, a mystery is nothing more than a crime and a solution. In order for a mystery to succeed, the audience has to feel engaged, on the edge of their seat for the entire ride.

That being said, *Murder on the Orient Express* has a lot going for it. It has a diverse cast of talented actors, a plot filled with revelations and secrets, and a finale that subverts all of the audience's expectations.

Unlike many stories in the same genre, *Murder* is well aware that it is a mystery, allowing it to play with narrative tropes in

order to keep the audience on their toes.

However, it struggles to develop its characters past their initial characterizations, making many of the deductions and plot beats seem cheap and unearned.

It also rushes through the story, especially in the final act, where attention to detail and careful storytelling are the most important. Though these decisions do not ruin the film, they definitely detract from the cohesiveness of the film.

*Murder* takes place shortly after World War I, as a group of 14 strangers embark on a journey aboard the titular train. From the beginning, each character is neatly slotted into an archetypal role.

To name a few: the flirty socialite (Michelle Pfeiffer), the governess (Daisy Ridley) and the doctor (Leslie Odom Jr.) in a mysterious relationship, and a gangster turned art dealer (Johnny Depp).

Of course, there's Hercule Poirot (played by Ken-

neth Branagh who also directed the film), the detective whose moustache is almost as famous as his crime-solving skills.

When one of his fellow passengers is killed during the journey, Poirot is naturally called upon to take the case. His clues: a woman in a red kimono, a broken watch, and a case involving the abduction and murder of a young girl.

The cast is incredibly talented, and there is not a weak performance among the bunch; Pfeiffer and Ridley's strong showings are of particular note. However, in part due to the number of suspects, very few of them receive any significant screen time.

When Poirot isn't interrogating them, the cast is just sitting around and eating in silence. It is bizarre to have a cast as talented and diverse as *Murder*'s and not give them something more to do.

Most of the movie's runtime is spent focusing on Poirot, a decision that both helps and hinders the film. Branagh excels during dramatic moments; when Poirot is serious, his character perfectly melds with the film's overall aesthetic. However, he is occasionally thrust into comedic situations, which clash with the film's serious atmosphere.

Visually, *Murder* is stunning. From the streets of Istanbul to the carriages of the Orient Express, every shot is incredibly well executed. The costumes are also beautiful, and every

character looks distinct and unique.

Every sweep of the dining car and overhead view of the cabin evokes the film's refined aesthetic. The victim's corpse is shown in a single scene, long after the other passengers discover it. Furthermore, we only see it from far away, emphasizing the detachment and tranquility of the snowfall surrounding the train.

After an hour or so of investigation and interrogation, Poirot reveals his findings as he paces back and forth in front of the gathered suspects. The murder plot is incredibly inventive, and the film does an excellent job of laying it out in a tense scene.

Although the explanation is understandable, it ends up a bit rushed. Several characters have their backstories revealed and discarded in a sentence or two. Again, this is understandable due to the film's large cast, but it undercuts the impact of the revelations.

However, despite its flaws, *Murder on the Orient Express* is still a very enjoyable film. Its weak spots can likely be attributed to difficulties inherent in adapting the novel to the screen.

The actors are wonderful, the plot is complex yet understandable, and every second of the film looks amazing. If it sounds interesting, I would definitely encourage you to see it, but I recommend you read the book before you go.

# Escaping into art at London's Tate Modern Gallery

By TANYA WONGVIBULSIN  
For *The News-Letter*

This Thanksgiving break, I had the chance to visit the Tate Modern, one of the most prominent contemporary art museums in London. Located on the South Bank of the River Thames, Tate Modern is a massive building that houses many different themed galleries and art installations.

Since I had limited time to spend in the museum, I decided to dedicate most of my attention to two displays, *Artist and Society* and *Media Networks*.

While walking through my first gallery, I was lost in Kaveh Golestan's photography, which documented sex-workers living in Tehran's former red light district, Shahr-e No, during 1975-1977.

The black and white photography of the prostitutes and the grim environment they lived in opened my eyes to the harsh realities that women living on the margins of Iran faced.

One of Golestan's comments on his work, posted on the Tate Modern's website, really stuck with me. "I want to show you images that will be like a slap in your face to shatter your security. You can look away, turn off, hide your identity... but you cannot stop the truth. No one can," Golestan said, according to the Tate Modern.

While walking through a room filled with very genuine photographs, I experienced a mixture of

emotions: disbelief, sympathy, anger and gloom. Some photographs were so dark that I had to look away.

Yet I could not ignore the fact that the images were real and were a snapshot of someone's reality. My interaction and reaction toward the artwork truly reflected the artist's commentary.

As I continued to wander through the gallery, my jaw dropped when I saw Joseph Beuys' *Lightning with Stag in its Glare*.

The massive triangular structure — cast out of bronze and almost touching the ceiling — represents lightning, a natural energy of the Earth. The ironing board, cart and lumps of bronze on the floor represent three different animals: the stag, goat and primordial animals.

The installation attempts to capture a short moment in nature when

lightning strikes and illuminates figures of animals in its glare. If I had not read the caption and done a quick Google search of the artwork, I would have had no idea what the installation

actually represents.

The *Media Networks* gallery is a collection of artwork that represents different artists' responses to mass media.

One of the pieces that struck me the most was the Guerrilla Girls' yellow poster of a naked woman wearing a gorilla head with the bold heading, "Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?"

The artwork attacks sexism in the art world, where there is often an imbalance between the number of male and female artists featured in museums and galleries.

Other works made by the Guerrilla Girls explore different questions about feminism and racism by using bold words and satire to attract the attention of those passing by.

After walking past works by the Guerrilla Girls, I was delighted to see some work by Barbara Kruger.

— one of the artists I actually knew of prior to my visit to the museum.

Kruger's piece *Who Owns What?* manipulates black and white photography and letters enclosed in a block of red that challenges the viewer to think about economic inequality.

Her visual style seems intertwined with the advertising techniques used in the 1980s and allows her artwork to easily raise questions and get messages across.

Walking through the Tate Modern, even for just one hour, was eye opening.

I felt like I was lost in different time periods and places in the world, learning things through the perspectives of different people.

I would highly recommend the Tate to anyone who plans to visit London and has a couple of hours to spare; there is so much to learn and explore at this museum.



DEPHISTICATE/CC BY 2.0  
Jadakiss began his hip-hop career with the LOX, the legendary Yonkers trio.



COURTESY OF TANYA WONGVIBULSIN  
Barbara Kruger's piece *Who Owns What?* is on display in the Tate's Media Matters exhibit.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# Internet radio leads to new music finds

FROM DISCOVER, B3

discordant. These radio mixes are a great insight into inspirations of one of the most talented contemporary artists. It is also a great opportunity to hear selections that you may otherwise have never discovered.

The crew at blonded never fail to make a mix with exciting transitions, unexpected track selections and some hilarious, interesting skits.

Youtube music channels are usually kitschy and cheap. There are a lot of things that are wrong with them. Most prominent is the persistent use of scantily clad female models as thumbnails in order to garner views. Second, there is an overindulgence in subscribing to an aesthetic which further cheapens the product.

With those two combined, I usually feel guilty checking out any of those channels. Majestic Casual suffers slightly from both of those ailments but not to the same dirty extent that other channels do.

The thing that separates Majestic from a lot of the other channels is both the consistent quality of the content and the diversity of the selections.

While other curators will bear down on a certain mood/genre, Majestic somehow consistently features great tracks from EDM all the way to hip hop. Phenomenal artists like Snakehips, Kaytranada and Mura Masa have gotten massive boosts from having their work being featured on Majestic.

Every once and awhile, Majestic will share and promote a song that is off the mark and kitschy, but the ratio of duds to consistently good tracks is almost ridiculously low.

There are dozens of artists who I have discovered through just hitting shuffle on the thousands of videos Majestic has put out. Most of the music featured there is off-kilter and at least somewhat unique — you wouldn't expect to hear most of it on the radio.

Take, for example, Swell's "I'm Sorry (feat. Shiloh)," a song solely composed of a vocal sample and some unique sound design. The rattling electronic drums are backed by sliding synths and a heavy sub, while the vocal sample is distorted and pitched wildly — all of this works perfectly to fit the groove. It is a gem like this that you can only find on Majestic.

Finding a great music curator almost feels like striking oil, they can provide you with an almost endless list of tracks to check out.

This abundance does mitigate some of the enjoyment of naturally discovering artists; there isn't that same sense of ownership.

Nonetheless, there is nothing more calming than tossing on the playlist of a curator you vibe with and letting the new music flow. Sometimes it can be nice to let go of the reigns and let yourself be driven along a journey that you have no control over.

# Dear Evan Hansen is an emotional look at adolescence

By DIVA PAREKH  
Copy Editor

Ever since I first heard the *Dear Evan Hansen* soundtrack by Benji Pasek and Justin Paul, I've wanted to go see this musical. Even the first few times I listened to it, when I had no idea what the storyline was, the music somehow made me cry.

A few months ago it was announced that original cast member Ben Platt, who plays Evan Hansen, would be leaving the show after November 19. It took a few weeks of agonizing over my bank balance, but eventually I bought a ticket for the November 18 show at the Music Box Theatre in New York City so I could see the show with him in it.

I'm not going to tell you how much it cost, because I know my parents are reading this, and if they find out they will fly all the way here from India and murder me. Needless to say, it was an excessive amount. Was it worth that? Every single penny.

When you enter the Music Box Theatre, you're greeted by the sound of familiar phone beeps amplified over the stage speakers. The stage has a small bed and a desk on it — a standard teenager's bedroom. Hanging from the walls, you see long narrow screens, filled with constantly changing social media newsfeeds

with a soft blue light behind them.

The show starts with a phone ringing, ironically telling you to silence your phone, and you see Ben Platt in that little bedroom. Within the first few minutes of the show, you can tell that Evan Hansen has some form of social anxiety.

Platt talks at a million miles an hour, with the jittery, nervous demeanor of a teenager overthinking his every move. Toward the beginning, he's constantly hunched over, talking to the floor instead of to people. But as the show progresses, you see him slowly grow.

Ben Platt won a Tony award for his performance in *Dear Evan Hansen*, and it's absurdly easy to see why. He has several heartbreaking solos, like "Waving Through a Window" and "Words Fail," both of which he sings through tears. You can hear him sniffing and you can see the very real tears roll down his face.

During most of the songs, particularly the slower solos towards the end, the entire audience falls silent. All you can hear from the audience is muffled sniffing, and the only movement you can see is the raised elbows of people wiping their tears away.

*Dear Evan Hansen* is undeniably moving, but what the show does an excellent job with is breaking up the intense emo-

tionality with humor.

Will Roland and Mike Faist, who play Jared Kleinman and Connor Murphy, respectively, just go out there during "Sincerely, Me" and have fun. The dance is ridiculous, the sexual jokes are exactly what you'd expect from teenage boys, and you get to relax before Laura Dreyfuss (Zoe Murphy) takes your breath away with "Requiem."

I'm not going to reveal anything about the story, not just because I don't want to give you unwanted spoilers, but because *Dear Evan Hansen* goes beyond its own plot. Don't get me wrong, I absolutely loved the story. But what made me cry from start to finish was how I could feel every single emotion with the characters.

With depictions of mental health issues, it's very easy to feel detached from the experience if it's not something you or someone you know has been through. Evan Hansen very clearly has anxiety, and it is hinted that he tries to commit suicide before the timeline of the show. With a lot of media that portrays similar issues, audiences feel sympathy but not necessarily empathy.

What *Dear Evan Hansen* does like nothing I've ever seen before is humanize those experiences. Anyone can relate to being "on the outside always looking in," one of the lyrics of "Waving



THE TONY AWARDS/CC BY 3.0

Ben Platt and Rachel Bay Jones won Tonys for *Dear Evan Hansen*.

Through a Window." Every teenager worries about how their life is going to turn out. The sentiment in "Will I ever be more than I've always been?" is something I feel all the time.

In "Only Us," Laura Dreyfuss sings, "I don't need more reminders of all that's been broken," which is eventually followed by "We can't compete with all that." It's the feeling of being smaller than everything happening in your life, the feeling that nothing's in your control and if you find something that is, you cling onto it.

Rachel Bay Jones, who plays Evan's mother Heidi Hansen, was amazing as a mother desperately trying to connect with her son. In her solos "Good for You" and "So Big / So Small," I felt my mother's pain in a way I never have before.

I've never been happier than I am now at college, and when I tell my mom

about it, she seems happy. But I always get the sense that it hurts her somehow that she couldn't give me that happiness when I was still home.

Jones portrays Heidi's anger and pain in "So you found a place where the grass is greener" by simultaneously yelling and crying while singing. When she sang "Your mom isn't going anywhere / Your mom is staying right here / No matter what," I didn't even try to hide the fact that I was sobbing.

*Dear Evan Hansen* was an incredibly cathartic experience. I came out a jumbled mess of emotion, feeling this strange kind of connection not just with the cast but also with every single person who was in the audience with me. Evan Hansen is just one lonely kid, but a kid who has the heart-wrenching capacity to make anyone start to hope.

# Slowdive and Cherry Glazerr's show lights up Rams Head Live!



BENE RIBOO/CC BY-SA 3.0

The shoegazing band Slowdive reunited in 2014 after nearly 20 years.

By DUBRAY KINNEY  
Senior Staff Writer

On Nov. 17, British shoegaze veterans Slowdive and Los Angeles garage-rock band Cherry Glazerr played at Rams Head Live! as part of Slowdive's North American tour. The band skipped over Baltimore in their original tour dates for the United States, instead hitting D.C. in May. But, two weeks ago, they managed to make their way here, and the show was great.

Slowdive formed in 1989, becoming a crucial part of the '90s shoegaze/dream pop scene that popped in England, known as "The Scene That Celebrates Itself." Key albums that helped form this shoegaze movement include the seminal My Bloody Valentine album *Loveless*, the Cocteau Twins 1990s dream-pop album *Heaven or Las Vegas* and Slowdive's most well-known record *Souvlaki*.

*Souvlaki* came out during the latter portion of the shoegaze movement

and failed to make a large mark on the charts or critically. But over time it became a cult classic of sorts, shaving down some of the rougher edges from the rest of the scene. The production comes across as crisp and smooth, which stands in odds with a few of the things that I like about shoegaze.

The influence of bands like early Sonic Youth and Swans — with their hectic, noisy styles that would build slowly to a fever swell — were missing on *Souvlaki* and the band's follow-up album *Pygmalion*. *Pygmalion* also marked a larger move towards a dream pop sound for the band.

After *Pygmalion*, multiple members of the band left and the remaining members changed their name to Mojave 3, releasing the amazing dream pop album *Ask Me Tomorrow*. Mojave 3 released music until 2006 but continued touring for some time after leaving the studio.

Slowdive reformed with

its original lineup in 2014, playing multiple festivals before recording and releasing their comeback album, *Slowdive*, this year. The album followed in the dream pop footsteps of Mojave 3 and *Pygmalion*.

The show was a huge surprise for me. The band's sound could be compared to staying in on a sad, rainy day (in the best way possible), but the show featured lighting that wouldn't have been out of place at an EDM show. It worked well though, the blaring wall of sound mixed with blinding lights helped to elicit an overwhelming feeling that I associate with shoegaze music. The guitar work blared, distorted but clean and with tons of reverb. It was exactly what I wanted out of the show.

The band played songs from across their entire discography, with highlights being their performance of "Alison" from *Souvlaki*. The live rendition was pretty great, although it paled in comparison to the pitch-perfect studio version — but hey,

what can you do? The real standout performance was "Crazy for You" from *Pygmalion*, featuring Rachel Goswell's amazing vocals over the catchy guitar riff that lays a foundation for the song.

There was also a really great performance of one of the lead singles from *Slowdive*, "Sugar for the Pill," which featured an eye-catching series of images the band produced on the screen behind them (a rotating pill that broke open before reforming multiple times).

Slowdive was supported by the Los Angeles band Cherry Glazerr, perhaps best known for their initial Bandcamp output, from which they moved on to sign with Burger Records. Now signed to Secretly Canadian, Cherry Glazerr recently released their second studio album *Apocalipstick*.

Cherry Glazerr's earlier songs caught the eyes of a number of blogs including Stereogum. Their 2014 single "Had Ten Dollaz" was their breakout release and the EP of the same name also gar-

nered plenty of praise.

Cherry Glazerr is growing at a steady pace in terms of popularity, as the band was barely on anyone's radar a few years ago and is now releasing music videos on their own Vevo channel. They have even made some "End of the Year" lists, a good sign for an up-and-coming act.

Slowdive and Cherry Glazerr make for a weird duo for a live performance, with one being super-serious and mournful while the other is more playful and in your face rock and roll. But the crowd was into it, and truth be told, so was I.

Usually a mix of energetic bands and slower ones don't make for the best of experiences, and though I loved Windjammer Festival a few years back, I maintain that Beach House should have played before Future Islands and Dan Deacon, as that would've built up the atmosphere.

That said, of the recent shows that have been at Rams Head Live!, this was one of the better ones.

## Errata: November 16

In the Nov. 16 issue of *The News-Letter*, Baila! was said to have done three dances. They actually performed four dances at the Culture Show: Micaela, Safari, Darte Un Beso and Pegate. Additionally, their dance to the song Pegate, a traditional Puerto Rican Plena, was especially dedicated to Puerto Rico rather than Darte Un Beso.

*The News-Letter* regrets this error.

# CARTOONS, ETC.

## The Finish-line

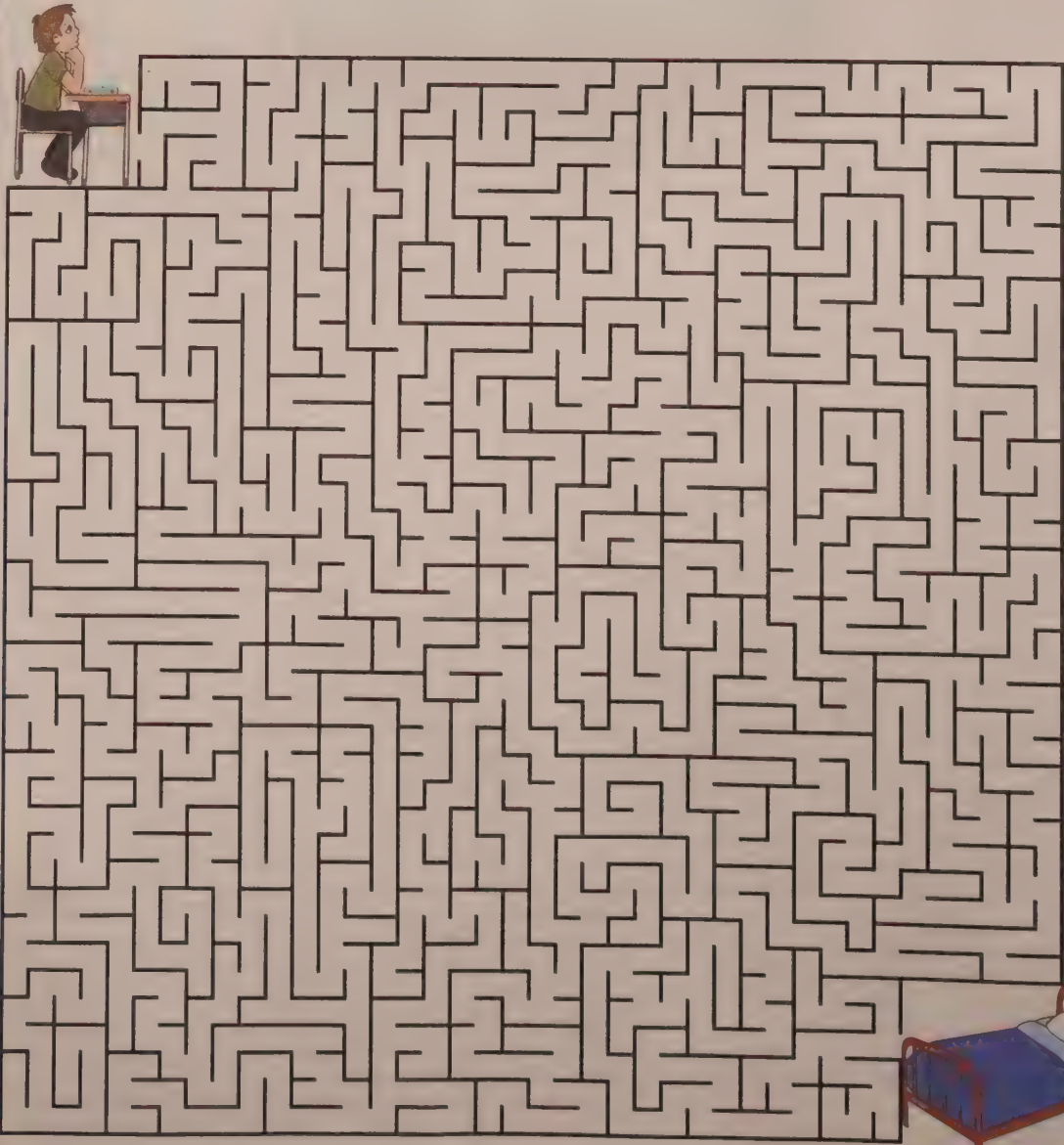
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By: GISELLE RUIZ

- COLD  
HOLIDAYS
- DEATH  
HOME
- DREAMS  
STUDY
- FAILING  
VACATION
- HELL  
WINTER



## Time to go Home from Brody



By: GISELLE RUIZ

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# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## Researchers find new treatment for heart failure



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Diastolic heart failure can be treated by surgically implanting a shunt that reduces pressure build up in the heart.

By **RACHEL HUANG**  
For *The News-Letter*

It's widely known that the heart is one of the most important organs in the human body. With its contracting and relaxing motions, the heart is able to pump blood to different areas within the body, thus providing nutrients and various necessary hormones to ensure the body operates at an optimal level.

However, all vital processes have the possibility of becoming defective in some way. For the heart, many different problems can arise due to either congenital disorders or simply the heart tiring out. Researchers at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center have discovered a way to alleviate the stress that occurs in the heart.

When blood first enters through the superior and inferior vena cava, it pools into the right atrium. When the right atrium contracts, the blood is pumped into the right ventricle. The right atrium then relaxes and the right ventricle contracts,

pumping blood into the lungs via the pulmonary artery to get oxygenated.

This oxygenated blood then enters the left atrium and, through contraction, the left ventricle. When the left ventricle contracts, blood moves first through the aorta and then throughout the body via arteries.

In one condition, known as diastolic heart failure or heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF), the ability of the heart to deliver blood properly to the body is impaired. This impairment causes a deficiency of oxygen-rich blood from reaching various parts of the body.

Diastolic heart failure is known as a left-sided heart failure because of its effect on the left ventricle. In patients with diastolic heart failure, the left ventricle's ability to relax after contraction is compromised. This results in a stiff muscle and prevents the blood from entering the left chamber in the most optimal capacity.

Because the left ventricle is responsible for pumping enough blood to the rest of

the body, the left ventricle of someone with HFpEF must work harder to pump the same amount of blood than someone without HFpEF.

In several incidences, diastolic heart failure can cause shortness of breath. This is largely due to the left ventricle not being able to relax completely after contraction.

The left ventricle is then not able to retain as much blood, causing some to flow backwards into the left atrium and then back into the lungs.

Researchers like Dr. Rami Kahwash, a cardiologist at the university's Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital, discovered that by placing a dime-sized catheter between the left and right atrial chambers they were able to relieve the pressure built up on the left side.

"It's just like when you

have a traffic jam. Instead of backing up all the way back to the lungs, we're creating a detour that's taking the blood around another route and relieving the pressure," Kahwash said in a press release.

In this study, 44 diastolic heart failure patients were randomly selected to participate in the study. Half of the participants underwent a placebo treatment to act as the control and the other half received the interatrial shunt device. After a month, the pulmonary capillary wedge pressure (PCWP) values were taken and compared.

Kahwash and his co-researcher Dr. Scott Lilly, a cardiologist and director of the Ohio State University Structural Heart Disease Program, concluded that the shunt reduced PCWP readings by 3.5 mmHg.

"This interatrial shunt device may be an opportunity to improve quality of life and exercise capacity for patients that currently have few other options," Lilly said in a press release.

The study has estimated that within the next five years, the number of diastolic heart failure cases will be responsible for more than half of all heart failure cases.

"Because it's a growing public health problem finding a new treatment option for DHF is crucial," Kahwash said.

## A single gene may affect susceptibility to obesity

By **ELAINE CHIAO**  
Science & Technology Editor

Obesity is a health issue that has been affecting growing numbers of Americans in recent years. While people generally believe that obesity is caused by eating and various lifestyle habits, researchers are working to pinpoint a gene that might be directly responsible for obesity.

The concept of genetically disposed obesity, otherwise known as fault-free obesity, has occupied the interests of a group of researchers in the Research Triangle located in North Carolina.

Through studying mice, the group of researchers discovered that variations in a gene called ankyrin-B might be the reason obesity exists in many Americans.

Ankyrin-B is a gene that millions of Americans have, and certain variations of this gene cause fat cells to absorb glucose at an uncommonly rapid rate. This results in a significant size increase amongst fat cells, which is a phenomenon that is known to frequently induce obesity when combined with other stress factors such as a high-fat diet or a slowed-down metabolism.

Dr. G. Vann Bennett is currently a George Barth

Geller Professor of Biochemistry at Duke University School of Medicine, and he is one of the senior authors of the ankyrin-B study.

Bennett discovered ankyrin-B more than three decades ago, and after extensive investigations he believes that this gene might have helped our ancestors store energy in times of famine.

"In current times, where food is plentiful, ankyrin-B variants could be fueling the obesity epidemic," Bennett said in a press release.

In fact, it has been deduced that ankyrin-B functions like an anchor that attaches proteins to the internal cell membrane. It is present in essentially every tissue in the human body, and observed defects in ankyrin-B have often been correlated to a handful of diseases such as autism, diabetes and irregular heartbeat.

The functional implications of ankyrin-B were first discovered several years ago by two researchers in Bennett's lab.

Jane Healey, an MD/PhD student at that time, noticed that mice with ankyrin-B mutations were fatter on average than their wildtype counterparts. To verify the observation, a postdoctoral fellow named Damaris

SEE *OBESITY*, PAGE B9

## Exercising can prevent brains from shrinking

By **CINDY JIANG**  
For *The News-Letter*

In this day and age, there is hardly a need for another reason to pick up a gym membership. The apparent benefits of exercise

are seemingly endless, with a number of positive physical and emotional changes associated with taking a bit of time to sweat.

But if an active lifestyle and ideal body proportions are just not enticing enough to

make you tie those laces and go out for a run, perhaps a recent study from several institutions may do the job.

Scientists from Australia's National Institute of Complementary Medicine at Western Sydney University and the Division of Psychology and Mental Health at The University of Manchester in the United Kingdom worked together in an international collaborative effort to pinpoint the effect of aerobic exer-

cise on the hippocampus of the brain.

The hippocampus is found in the medial temporal lobe and separated into right and left hemispheres. Its primary functions involve the conversion of short-term

memories to long-term memories as well as spatial memory contributing to navigation. Any damage to this region leads to memory loss and disorientation, and it may be caused by oxygen deprivation.

A shortage of oxygen is quite obviously detrimental to the hippocampus. Yet if the opposite conditions are true and there is an abundance of oxygen, what will happen?

There are two types of exercise — aerobic and anaerobic. Aerobic exercise is defined as having to do with the pumping of oxygenated blood by the heart in order to supply working muscles with oxygen.

SEE *EXERCISE*, PAGE B8

By **JESSICA KASAMOTO**  
For *The News-Letter*

While some scientists believe that life must exist outside of Earth, proof of extraterrestrial life has yet to be uncovered.

However, with the recent discovery of planet Ross 128 b, this may soon change. Research has shown Ross 128 b to be very Earth-like; scientists believe that it has the kind of environment that would be able to support the type of biology found on Earth.

By cosmic standards, Ross 128 b is located extremely close — 11 light-years away.

The planet is 20 times closer to its parent star, Ross 128, than Earth is to the sun, so much so that it only takes approximately 9.9 days for the planet to complete a single orbit. While this close proximity would typically make a planet scalding hot, this is not the case with Ross 128 b.

This is because Ross 128 is a red dwarf star, making it much smaller and cooler than our sun.

This planet was discovered by a European telescope stationed in a desert in Chile using a technique called the radial velocity method.

Ordinary telescopes are rarely able to view planets in other solar systems because these planets are so much smaller than their parent stars and the glare given by the planets' parent stars obscures scientists' views. The radial velocity

method avoids these problems by instead aiming to detect the slight wobble in the star caused by the gravitational tug of a planet in orbit.



COURTESY OF NASA

Scientists recently discovered a planet that may have Earth-like environmental conditions necessary to support life.

Scientists believe that the surface temperature of Ross 128 b is about 78 degrees Fahrenheit, so its surface conditions are comparable to those on Earth. It is also believed that Ross 128 b has a slow rotation.

This slow rotation is significant because if the planet has an atmosphere, it would have not been "shaken off" by fast rotation, which happens often on other planets.

Since Earth is the only planet known to hold life, it would make sense to look for life on other planets with parent stars that are similar to the sun.

However, G-type stars like our sun are relatively rare; red dwarf stars, on the other hand, make up about 75 percent of all stars.

Therefore, probability-wise, it may be more likely to find life on planets with red dwarf parent stars that orbit close to the parent star instead of a planet that rotates relatively far away from a G-type star, like the Earth does.

Ross 128 b is not the first Earth-like planet that scientists have found orbiting a red dwarf star. In 2014, scientists discovered the dwarf planet Proxima Centauri, which orbits its dwarf star parent star in a galaxy 4.2 light years away from Earth.

However, Ross 128 b seems to be significantly more likely to hold life than Proxima Centauri.

The reason for this is that scientists have observed Proxima Centauri's parent star to be volatile. The parent star sent out more than 66 solar flare outbursts in 2016 with nearly lethal levels of radiation.

While these solar flares do not guarantee that life is non-existent on the planet, they make it much less likely. Ross 128 b's parent star, on the other hand, seems to be much less volatile with far fewer observed flaring events.

While there is no guarantee that Ross 128 b contains any life at all, the discovery of this planet makes scientists even more optimistic about finding extraterrestrial life. Scientists are slowly improving their techniques and instrumentation used to find potential life-bearing planets.

# The sheep disease that changed human biology



Allison Chen  
History of Science

Throughout the 18th century, wool dominated England's commerce, with the wool trade involving, directly or indirectly, almost one-fourth of the population. It fed the nation's mills and co-fers, and anything that threatened the sheep that produced it was clearly a cause for concern.

One such danger was a fatal disease that would come to be known as scrapie. It caused behavioral changes in the animals it affected, including tremors, loss of coordination and a compulsive tendency to rub against objects as though dealing with an itch, hence the name.

The first English cases of scrapie appeared in 1732, and the disease was brought to the attention of the government by 1755, although it likely had a longer history in northern and central continental Europe.

Over the next 200 years, European scientists researching the disease managed to infect healthy sheep and goats with scrapie, concluding that it was transmissible. They took note of its years-long incubation period and discovered that whatever caused scrapie was unaffected by formaldehyde. Still, the infectious agent remained unknown.

Though the elusive nature of scrapie's etiology had already led some researchers, including veterinary neurologist Anthony Palmer, to predict the cause of the disease, it remained something that had to do with farm animals.

It became relevant to humans in 1959, when veterinary pathologist William Hadlow published a letter in *The Lancet* noting the clinical and pathological similarities between scrapie and a disease found in New Guinea's eastern highlands, kuru.

Emerging at the beginning of the 20th century, kuru predominantly affected New Guinea's Fore people, and by the late 1950s, it was killing around two percent of the Fore population per year and up to five or 10 percent in heavily affected communities.

Over the course of months, those afflicted, mainly women and children, would gradually exhibit a progression of neurological symptoms, losing control of their limbs, their emotions, then the ability to speak, swallow or sit up.

Carleton Gajdusek and Vincent Zigas, the scientists who first described the illness in Western

medical literature in 1957, initially suspected an infectious agent. But this theory stalled when an agent could not be found in samples sent to labs in Australia and America and when Gajdusek and Zigas could find no evidence of an immune response in kuru patients.

Hadlow's observation, and his suggestion that experiments should be conducted to test whether kuru could be transmitted from humans to laboratory primates, opened new possibilities.

Gajdusek took up the veterinary pathologist's suggestion and between 1963 and 1966, successfully infected chimpanzees with the disease. He also transmitted the disease between chimpanzees and began trying to transmit other human nervous system diseases to chimps, successfully doing so with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in 1968.

Scrapie, kuru and CJD became part of a group of progressive, neurodegenerative diseases labeled "transmissible spongiform encephalopathies" (TSEs). The cause remained undetermined, and it was tentatively attributed to a "slow virus."

By the late 1960s, it was becoming more apparent that a virus was not going to cut one as the sole explanation. Experiments with scrapie showed that its agent was sub-viral in size and unusually resistant to conditions that would kill other pathogens.

A 1965 paper by Iain Pattison supplied a list of treatments it had survived, everything from boiling for hours to chloroform to phenol to DNase and RNase.

Radiobiologist Tikvah Alper also demonstrated that the agent remained infectious after exposure to radiation of a wavelength specifically targeted at nucleic acids, suggesting that the agent did not contain them.

Then, in 1982, Stanley Prusiner sparked a furor with his paper hypothesizing that proteins, which he dubbed "prions," for proteinaceous infectious particles, were the infectious agent responsible for scrapie.

This proposal of an agent, a misfolded protein, that replicates without genetic material by transforming normal proteins, was "heretical" at first. It has since gained widespread acceptance, especially after prions were artificially created in vitro.

Though exact mechanisms and the role of genetics in someone's potential for developing some prion diseases are still being explored, prions have already reshaped views on infectious agents and are involved in research surrounding other neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Scrapie's influential past is likely only to grow.

# Aerobic exercise slows human brain deterioration

EXERCISE, FROM B7

Anaerobic exercise, on the other hand, is performed in the absence of oxygen. Therefore aerobic exercise increases the concentration of oxygen in the bloodstream and throughout the body.

Human brains decrease in volume by a factor of five percent per decade after the age of 40. This downsizing plays a vital part in the deterioration of brain health in older adults.

Previous studies in mice and rats have identified a possible solution to this eventual outcome in the ability of physical exercise to reverse the shrinking of the hippocampus.

The study, with researchers from Australia and the United Kingdom, ran 14 clinical trials that produced 737 brain scans both before and after participation in an aerobic exercise trial.

With an age range of 24 to 76 years and an average age of 66 years, the subjects included healthy individuals and people with mild cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's and individuals with a clinical

diagnosis of mental illnesses such as depression or schizophrenia.

Examples of aerobic exercises that subjects were exposed to included stationary cycling, walking and treadmill running. Particular experiments took

anywhere from three to 24 months, with a range of two to five sessions per week.

According to Joseph Firth, lead author and a NICM postdoctoral research fellow, researchers discovered a significant increase in the size of the hippocampus' left hemisphere, despite there being no change in its total volume.

"When you exercise you



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Aerobic exercise, such as jogging, may temporarily remedy brain loss due to memory diseases.

produce a chemical called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which may help to prevent age-related decline by reducing the deterioration of the brain," Firth said in a press release.

The data showed that aerobic exercise can effectively slow down the deterioration of brain size among older individuals. In other words, exercise can maintain the brain's functions and resist aging.

The right hippocampus is concerned with memory for locations within an environment, and the left hippocampus is concerned with episodic or autobiographical memory.

The increase in volume of the left hippocampus suggests that aerobic exercise may serve as a temporary remedy to memory-related conditions like Alzheimer's and the detrimental effects of ageing as a whole.

## Wrap up: the latest in technology...

By WILLIAM XIE

Staff Writer &  
JONATHAN PATTERSON  
For The News-Letter

### Uber paid off hackers who breached customer information

In October 2016, Uber paid hackers \$100,000 to keep quiet about their breach of the personal information of about 50 million Uber riders and 7 million drivers. Data stolen included names, email addresses and phone numbers but not Social Security numbers, credit card information or trip service details.

Uber recently admitted to the massive breach and payment. According to Bloomberg, the hackers obtained the information after successfully hacking into an Amazon Web Services account. In response to the breach, Uber fired Chief Security Officer Joe Sullivan and another executive.

"None of this should have happened, and I will not make excuses for it," Chief Executive Officer Dara Khosrowshahi said, according to a press release.

The breach is not Uber's only worry, as the recently revealed "cover-up" may be considered a violation of data breach notification laws.

### Net neutrality policy under threat

The buzzword "net neutrality" refers essentially to rules designed to ensure the Internet is free from the influence of Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Any lawful content is to be treated equally in the eyes of ISPs, and thus, there can be no bias that includes blocking or slowing down content.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently released the final draft of "Restoring Internet Freedom," which will achieve the exact opposite. The proposal will reverse net neutrality rules established in 2015. FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, known to be an opponent of net neutrality, announced that the FCC will vote to rollback net neutrality on Dec. 14. The vote, however, is basically predetermined, since the commission is divided three-to-two along partisan lines.

What does the end of net neutrality mean? ISPs will have more influence over pricing and service bandwidth.

### Bitcoin value surges

In the month of November, bitcoin mining electricity consumption is estimated to have increased by nearly 30 percent and with good reason. At the start of November, bitcoin was valued at \$6,750. By press deadline, bitcoin's value peaked at \$9,721. Bitcoin's market value has increased from \$15 billion to \$156 billion since January 2017.

According to the Digiconomist's Bitcoin Energy Consumption Index, an estimated 30.25 TWh of electricity is consumed in a year of bitcoin mining, which is enough to power about 2.8 million U.S. households.

The energy consumption from bitcoin mining is greater than the electricity consumption of more than 12 U.S. states. China leads the world in bitcoin mining, consuming 20 percent of the estimated 30 TWh of electricity. The U.S. is second at 13 percent of total energy consumption from bitcoin mining. Russia, India and Japan follow at 3.3 percent each.

### White House Office of Science and Technology Policy shrinks under Trump's presidency

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has been a part of the White House infrastructure for the past 41 years. However, in the 10 months since President Trump was inaugurated, the Office of Science and Technology Policy has been missing both a leader and a mandate for the longest period of time in the office's history.

Referred to as the OSTP, the office has held only two events since the Trump administration took over. To date, the White House has not made its intentions clear on the exact future of the Office's leadership. Under the past seven administrations, the OSTP has served to advise the President on a number of policy issues. Regardless, the OSTP staff has fallen from 135 under President Obama to 45 under President Trump. Of the 45 members of the Trump OSTP, the majority do not have a background in science, including the Office's de facto leader, Deputy White House Chief Technology Officer Michael Kratsios.

Kratsios, former chief of staff to Trump-ally and tech billionaire Peter Thiel, comes from an investment banking background and lacks any science credentials besides a bachelor's in political science. According to CBS News, the White House claims this reduction is due to the team being "naturally streamlined" to focus on technology, science and national security.

# Epithelial stem cells can treat spinal cord injury

By ISAAC CHEN  
Staff Writer

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 250,000 to 500,000 people suffer from spinal cord injuries each year. A lot of these injuries are due to preventable causes, such as car crashes and falls.

Spinal cord injuries often lead to mental disorders, with an estimated 20-30 percent of those affected showing symptoms of depression.

In addition, there still remain various obstacles that people with disabilities face in modern society. For example, children with spinal cord injuries are less likely to attend school, and adults with the injury face a higher rate of unemployment.

Achieving significant recovery from spinal cord injuries is a continual challenge. However, in a recent study done by Javier Ganz and colleagues from Tel Aviv University in Israel, the research team presented a promising stem cell treatment in mice.

They used human oral mucosa stem cells (hOMSC) embedded in scaffold matrix to help repair spinal cord injuries.

Past research has shown that hOMSCs can be induced to function like astrocytes that secrete factors aimed at enhancing neuroprotection, cell growth and differentiation.

Scaffolds are another crucial factor that provide an environment where cells can proliferate, attach and differentiate. In their experiment, the researchers created a biodegradable, porous scaffold out of equal parts of copolymers known as PLGS and PLLA.

"PLGA was selected to provide flexibility, whereas PLLA was chosen to provide stiffness," Ganz said in a press release.

Ganz and colleagues hypothesized that combining hOMSCs with a PLGA/PLLA scaffold would create a device that helps rats recover from spinal cord injuries.

The researchers found that 42 percent of the rats treated with hOMSCs

were able to support their hind limbs and showed improved walking abilities during the first three weeks.

Although the improvement peaked after five weeks, the effects were persistent enough to last until the experiment ended. The recovered mice progressively revealed similar walking patterns to those of normal mice.

To examine the extent of reconnection in the injured areas, the researchers used techniques such as MRI diffusion tensor imaging and motor evoked potentials (MEPs).

In their MRI data, there were no signs of reconnection three days after the injury across all groups. However, there was partial reconnection on the 56th day in the rats treated with hOMSCs.

Interestingly, the researchers found that mice treated with only the scaffold exhibited a lesser degree of recovery. Their results support other previous studies that demonstrated scaffolds alone can promote recovery.

The researchers also observed an on/off effect in the treated group, in which the mice were either responsive or unresponsive to the treatment. They believe that the implant position contributes to the distinct results.

"Since the minimum requirements for eliciting substantial recovery have yet to be defined, subtle differences in the scaffold and its position related to the spinal cord stumps may have selectively favored restoration of some but not all tracts," the study said.

While the results in this article do not solve the problems of spinal cord injury and those associated with it, they do provide promising methods that urge the need to understand the mechanisms behind recovery.

According to the senior author of this study Shulamit Levenberg, even if there is still some way to go before the research can be applied in humans, the study's findings are heading toward a promising route.

# Video games can act as a substitute for IQ tests

By TERESA NG  
For the News-Letter

Those who enjoyed Orson Scott Card's science-fiction classic *Ender's Game* may remember how the governments in Card's futuristic world used computer simulation games to train the best and brightest children to beat an alien invasion.

While video games have not yet become of planet-saving import, researchers at the University of York have found that there is indeed a correlation between intelligence and being good at action strategy video games.

The researchers studied players who were proficient in popular multiplayer online battle arena games (MOBAs) and multiplayer first-person shooter games. MOBA, like the games of Card's world, organize players into opposing teams that strategize against each other. First-person shooters, on the other hand, allow players to experience the game from the perspective of a particular character, whose actions they can control.

The MOBAs *League of Legends* and *Dota 2* and first-person shooters *Destiny* and *Battlefield 3* were chosen for study.

It was found that just as skill with older strategy games like chess is correlated with a high IQ, those who played *League of Legends* with finesse also performed well in traditional pen-and-paper tests of intelligence. Perhaps this should not be a surprise.

"[MOBA games] are complex, socially-interactive and intellectually demanding," Athanasios Kokkinakis, a PhD student at York, said, according to *ScienceDaily*.

University of York Professor Alex Wade spoke to *ScienceDaily* about the additional benefits of these games.

"MOBAs rely more on memory and the ability to make strategic decisions taking into account multiple factors," Wade said.

Performing well in games with such features would naturally correlate with higher intelligence.



PUBLIC DOMAIN  
Researchers found that a link between intelligence and being good at action-based video games.

However, this correlation has not been found with first-person shooter games.

In fact, the study showed that players of first-person shooter games often saw their proficiency at the game drop as they aged. Again, this is not surprising — speed and coordination rather than strategy are important in these games.

But what is exciting about these findings is their potential for future research. MOBAs are immensely popular and played by millions around the world. If these games

can act as substitutes for IQ tests, researchers could potentially gather large amounts of data on intelligence at the global scale.

Such data would be valuable in studying the cognitive health of different populations. It would also be valuable in fields like cognitive epidemiology, which studies links between health, intelligence and psychology.

In short, while video games may not be saving the world, they are opening up fascinating new data sources for study — which may, in the end, amount to the same thing.

# Spiders have extremely short circadian rhythms

By ANNA CHEN  
For The News-Letter

For many college students, the start of a new day is marked by the shrill ring of an alarm clock in the morning and the end is dictated by our brains becoming too exhausted to process the textbook we are reading at the end of the night. But, in the absence of alarm clocks or a study schedule, when would we wake up and go to sleep?

Our sleeping and waking patterns are determined by a biological clock, regulated by the increase and decrease of hormones. In past studies, researchers have found that in extended periods of total darkness, organisms rely on their biological clocks, or circadian rhythms, to determine when they are active and when they rest.

The circadian rhythm of

humans runs, on average, about 10 minutes longer than Earth's 24-hour day.

Circadian rhythms have been a popular area of study for many years; the genes responsible for regulating the biological clocks in humans were determined recently.

Even more recently, a team of researchers made a puzzling finding — a group of three spider species called trashline orb-weavers have shockingly short internal clocks of just 17 to 19 hours.

What is the significance? For the spiders to have such a short biological rhythm means that every time the sun rises on a new day, instead of having their clocks reset 10 minutes like ours are, the spiders' clocks must be shifted the equivalent of five distinct time zones. Unlike us, these spiders can survive this drastic time

shift effortlessly.

Darrell Moore, a neurobiologist at East Tennessee State University, discovered the short biological clock period of the orb-weaver spiders while studying how the spiders tend to switch behaviors throughout the day.

Trashline orb-weavers build a line of "trash" out of dead bugs, feces and leaf litter, through the center of their circular webs. They use this trashline to disguise themselves from predators as they hide amongst the debris. After nightfall they become very active. Their peak activity is about three to five hours before sunrise.

To monitor their curious behavior, scientists caught wild trashline orb-weavers and took them to the laboratory. These spiders' activities were tracked using an infrared sensor, which would be triggered when spiders were

active and moved around.

Then, several days later, the spiders were monitored during weeks of continuous and total darkness, and their cycles of activity and rest revealed their unusually short biological clock periods, especially compared to some spiders with very long internal periods, up to 29 hours.

Natalia Toporikova, a biology professor at Washington and Lee University, described trashline orb-weaver spiders as "spiders without jetlag" in an interview with *The Washington Post*.

Their flexibility and adaptability are so impressive that she has decided that these spiders, instead of cockroaches, will conquer the world in the case of a "nuclear holocaust." At the very least, they will offer insight on circadian rhythms in different species and their effect on animal function.

# Ankyrin-B gene may be the cause of weight gain

OBESITY, FROM B7

Lorenzo carried out an experiment by isolating mice with various mutations in the targeted gene.

Healey and Lorenzo soon discovered that the mice quickly gained weight because their nutritional intake was converted into calories stored in fat tissues rather than burnt as energy in other tissues.

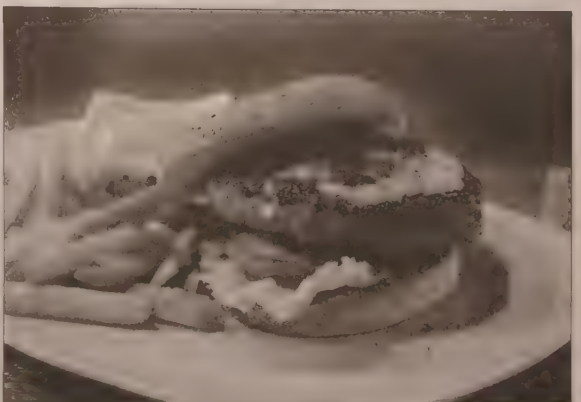
Although this discovery furthered the researchers' insight into ankyrin-B's functions, it still did not explain how the gene carried out these functions.

"There is this common belief in the field that much of obesity can be traced back to appetite and the appetite control centers that reside in the brain. But what if it isn't all in our head?" Bennett said, according to *Duke Today*.

In an attempt to answer this question, Lorenzo and her group began to knockout the ankyrin-B gene in mice.

As expected these mice had fat cells that almost doubled in size and subsequently gained more weight than the other mice despite exercising a similar amount. Furthermore, the weight gain was especially noticeable as the mice aged or were introduced to a high-calorie diet.

From repeated experiments, Lorenzo's team learned that mice can become obese without an increase in food consumption due to the underlying cellular mechanism of ankyrin-B. This could have significant clinical relevance because it could potentially help physicians identify high-risk individuals that



HORTON HARVEY/CC BY 2.0  
When a high-calorie diet is introduced, weight gain is particularly noticeable.

are prone to obesity.

Before this goal can be reached, however, Bennett said that they must first find a way to confirm that the lab findings are consistent with trends within the general population.

The researchers' study has been published in the

most recent edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

In the future, Bennett plans to study ankyrin-B variants in the population through assessing an individual's family history, BMI index and rate of glucose metabolism.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Stem cells can be embedded into scaffolds to repair spinal cord injury.

## SPORTS

# Who can challenge the NBA's top contenders? M. Basketball remains undefeated this season



Daniel Landy  
DanLand

**T**he NBA season is already nearing the quarter mark, and the league's expected hierarchy is, for the most part, shaping up as anticipated.

In the Eastern Conference, the Boston Celtics are rolling behind the efforts of Kyrie Irving, while the Cleveland Cavaliers are beginning to gain some momentum and ascend the standings. Out West, the Golden State Warriors, Houston Rockets and San Antonio Spurs are off to fast starts and look to once again be the Conference's three elite teams.

While the aforementioned teams are already beginning to separate themselves from the rest of the league, there are several middle-of-the-road teams that could be particularly intriguing as the season moves forward.

Though their records are nothing spectacular, the following four teams have the potential to be "wild cards" down the road. Let's examine these teams and determine their viability as legitimate contenders.

We begin in South Beach with the Miami Heat. The Heat was the NBA's cream of the crop in the first half of the decade and is currently looking to write a new chapter in its history with a young, rejuvenated roster.

This team genuinely bears no resemblance to that of the Heat's "Big 3" era; it goes nine-men deep, with each of those players making distinct but critical contributions to the team's success. In the backcourt, point guard Goran Dragic and shooting guard Dion Waiters bring offensive firepower and keep the team competitive with their elite scoring abilities.

On the defensive side of the ball, third-year players Josh Richardson and Justise Winslow bring high levels of energy that are crucial in effectively shutting down opposing offenses. Down low, Hassan Whiteside is a strong interior scorer and one of the best rim protectors in the league.

Off the bench, big men James Johnson and Kelly Olynyk, guard Tyler Johnson and three-point sharpshooter Wayne Ellington all prove worthy when they are on the court.

While the Heat's roster is deep, its fatal flaw may be its lack of a dominant superstar. This is not the old Miami team, where LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh could take down any opponent based on talent alone.

The current Heat team must be grittier and will require significant contributions up and down the roster to win on any given night. Miami will make some noise come playoff time, but their current makeup will make it difficult for the team to get past

the likes of LeBron and Kyrie in a playoff setting.

Let's move onto the Milwaukee Bucks, who, unlike the Heat, do not lack a superstar that can hang with the league's best. In fact, in Giannis Antetokounmpo, the Bucks have arguably the most intriguing and versatile young superstar in all of basketball.

The "Greek Freak," now in his fifth year, continues to amaze with his ability to make significant improvements to his game each and every season. He is now the second-leading scorer in all of basketball and only trails LeBron and James Harden in Player Efficiency Rating.

Antetokounmpo's supporting cast is also solid, with Khris Middleton, Malcolm Brogdon and new acquisition Eric Bledsoe serving as strong compliments to the 22-year-old phenom.

With their current roster, the Bucks are primed to be one of the East's best teams

for years to come. While they are off to a mediocre start this season, expect them to improve as their young players gain more experience. An NBA Finals birth may be a stretch, but this Milwaukee team is definitely good enough to win its first playoff series since 2001 and could be a dark horse to reach the Conference finals.

## While the Heat's roster is deep, its fatal flaw may be its lack of a dominant superstar.

Up next are the New Orleans Pelicans, quite possibly the most uniquely assembled team in the league. While the NBA is now predominantly focused on small ball, the Pelicans are trying to win by doing just the opposite. New Orleans has two of the league's best big men in Anthony Davis and DeMarcus Cousins and is using them to outsize their opponents.

While Davis and Cousins have been absolutely dominant so far this season, the team's lack of depth may prevent us from seeing the full potential of this dynamic duo. Aside from Jrue Holiday, Davis and Cousins have received little support from the rest of the roster. As the team does not have sufficient assets to acquire

more talent, it may be in their best interest to deal Cousins before his contract expires at the end of the season.

If the Pelicans do not see themselves as title contenders right now — which they are not in a historically deep and talented Western Conference — the experiment could come to an end before February's trade deadline. However, if the roster were to remain as currently assembled, it would be very interesting to watch the Pelicans go up against the Conference's elite-guard-

and-wing-heavy teams in the playoffs.

Speaking of guard-and-wing-heavy teams, let's look at the Oklahoma City Thunder, who may just be the biggest threat to the Golden State Warriors. Although the Thunder are off to a bit of a slow start, this can largely be attributed to the team's extensive offseason makeover. Off-season additions Carmelo Anthony and Paul George have joined reigning MVP Russell Westbrook to create a downright scary three-headed monster. Once these three All-Stars learn to coexist, they won't be afraid of any of the other 29 teams in the league.

The team's key to success is Westbrook. The Thunder will be in the best position to win if he is able to assert himself as the alpha dog. This strategy was exemplified in OKC's dominant win over the Warriors on Nov. 22. Westbrook put up a 34-10-9 stat line, while Anthony added 22 points and George had a 20-point double-double.

If the team is able to find the most effective way to utilize Westbrook, Anthony and George, while also making sure that they are fresh for the playoffs, watch out Golden State!

Be sure to keep your eyes on these four teams throughout the season. While they may not have the track records of the league's more established contenders, they are certainly capable of disrupting the status quo — something everyone is looking for.



HOPKINSSPORTS.COM

Junior Michael Gardner led the team with 16 points against McDaniel.

By GREG MELICK  
Sports Editor

The Hopkins men's basketball team opened the 2017-2018 season on Nov. 15 at home against the Marymount University Saints. It was also the debut for Hopkins head coach Josh Loeffler, who took over for Bill Nelson after 31 seasons with the Blue Jays.

In Coach Loeffler's first game at Hopkins, the Jays came out strong, going up 7-0 to start the game. Loeffler relied almost entirely on his starting five, as they contributed 79 of the team's 82 total points.

The Saints responded to the Jays' initial run with a scoring run of their own, tallying 15 of the next 20 points to take a 15-12 lead. The Jays would battle back for a slim lead that they would hold for the rest of the half. At the midway point, Hopkins had the slight advantage with a 31-27 lead.

However, midway through the second half, the Jays expanded their lead to 20 points. They would lead by as many as 25 points throughout the duration of the game. By the time the clock ran out, Loeffler had his first win at Hopkins, and the Jays had their first win of the season, with a final score of 82-60.

The team had a quick turnaround, as they traveled down to Memphis, Tenn. for the Rhodes Tip-Off Tournament over Thanksgiving break.

The Jays first faced off against the LeTourneau University Yellowjackets and then the host team, the Rhodes College Lynx, in the championship game.

The Hopkins offense thrived down south, scoring 93 points in their first matchup against the LeTourneau University Yellowjackets, followed by a whopping 118 points in their game against the host team, the Rhodes College Lynx, to win the championship.

The offense was led by senior forward Kyle Doran, who scored 23 points in their first game and 24 points in the championship.

After their weekend trip, the Blue Jays opened up Conference play against the McDaniel College Green Terror. In contrast to their season opener, 11 of their 12 players scored to clinch a 72-46 victory, pushing Hopkins to an undefeated 4-0 record to start the season.

The game went back and forth to start. Both teams took leads in the opening minutes, but Hopkins responded to a 13-15 deficit to go on a 10-0 run to take a 23-15 lead that they did not give up for the rest of the game.

During the run, junior guard Michael Gardner combined with Doran to

score nine of the 10 points. The Jays would take an 11-point lead into halftime.

Hopkins kept their foot on the gas in the second half, opening a lead as big as 30 points and winning 72-46. This time the Jays' defensive end shined, forcing 18 turnovers and scoring 31 points off of those takeaways.

Gardner led the team with 16 points and attributed their success on both sides of the court to the team's ability to communicate effectively.

"Everybody talks, calling out the offense and where people are on defense. This constant communication allowed for everybody to consistently be on the same page," Gardner said.

The communication continued to ring true in their last game against the Kean University Cougars. The Jays took the lead from 18 seconds in and never gave it up.

The team broke the single-game record for three-pointers made, with 16 three-pointers against the Cougars, including a single-game, record-tying eight threes made by Gardner on only 10 attempts.

The Jays won 77-53, giving them their fifth straight win to open the season. It is the first time the Jays have opened 5-0 since the 2006-07 season, in which they went 24-5 and made it to the second round of the NCAA tournament.

Though the Jays have had to deal with losing six seniors last season and coach Nelson, Hopkins has opened this season as strongly as possible heading into the bulk of the first round of Centennial Conference play. The transition from Coach Nelson to Coach Loeffler has been smooth, specifically due to their similar coaching styles.

"Coach [Loeffler] has been stressing that to capitalize on our shooting we have to look to play inside out. He and Coach Nelson have a similar philosophy in that regard, but they have different strategies in taking advantage of our shooting," Gardner said.

The outside shooting has been strong for the Jays so far this year. They are currently shooting 48.6 percent from beyond the arc and have three players — Doran, Gardner and freshman guard Joey Kern — shooting over 50 percent on the season. This has led Hopkins to average 88.4 points per game, while the defense has held the opposition to 69.4 points per game and a mere 23 percent from the three-point line.

"We believe we are good enough to win the Conference and make a deep run in the NAAs," Gardner said.

## Football loses in first round of NCAA

PLAYOFFS, FROM B12

away. The Presidents tied the ballgame once again, this time at 28.

The deciding drive of the game came as the Presidents took over with 4:22 left on the clock from their own 30. W&J drove the ball to the Hopkins 29-yard line, leaving the Presidents with a potential 46-yard field goal from kicker Maurico Garibay, who had made just one of three attempts during the regular season.

Garibay's kick sailed through the air and eventually hit off of the crossbar and through the uprights to give Washington & Jefferson the deciding three-point lead as the Presidents escaped with the 31-28 victory.

"The game didn't go the way that we wanted it to,

but our team never stopped fighting, and we gave W&J a run for their money," sophomore defensive lineman Weston Brantner said.

He emphasized how grateful the team is for the impact the senior class has made throughout their careers. Next season's team will need to step up to fill in the leadership positions the seniors this year held.

"We will all miss the character and the talent that this year's senior class gave to the program, but their impeccable leadership over the years has laid the foundation that we hope to build off of as we prepare for next season," Brantner said.

Rowse completed 36 of his 61 passes for 391 yards and three touchdowns, as well as three interceptions. Defensive back Cole

Weston's 22 carries gained him 124 on the ground, and three President receivers would crack the 100-yard mark.

Zubik tallied 114 yards and two TDs, junior Brandon Barnes gained 103 yards, and Hearst barely passed the 100-yard mark with 101 recorded yards to go along with his touchdown. Defensively, Presidents' linebacker Dalton Day would lead the team with 16 tackles, and defensive end Tom Marra finished with four sacks.

Tammaro completed 23 of 50 passes for 236 yards and a score along with two picks, 50 yards rushing and a TD on the ground. Cary would gain 64 yards rushing and 92 yards receiving, along with Caggiano's seven catches for 83 yards and a touchdown. On the defensive end, freshman defensive back Macauley Kilbane led the team with 10 total tackles, and Curry contributed two interceptions.

Sophomore defensive end Arman Koul reflected on this year's season.

"The way we dealt with adversity this season was phenomenal and I couldn't be prouder. It's really sad to see the seniors leave, but the legacy they're leaving on the program is something that I personally will never forget," Koul said.

Hopkins finishes their season at 9-2, and Washington & Jefferson's 11-1 season ended in the second round of the playoffs with a 46-23 loss to Frostburg State University.



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Sophomore quarterback David Tammaro completed 23 of 50 passes.

SPORTS

# M. Soccer season ends in the NCAA Sweet 16

By **MATTHEW RITCHIE**  
For *The News-Letter*

The men's soccer team's season came to an end two weekends ago with a heartbreaking finish in the NCAA Sweet 16 against the Tufts University Jumbos.

Before falling 4-1 in penalty kicks, the Blue Jays put up a valiant effort against the hosts of the NCAA Quarterfinal Regional, going into double overtime and holding the third-ranked team in the nation scoreless for 110 minutes.

The matchup was characterized by strong defense, which was to be expected as both teams are nationally ranked in the top three for goals against average per game. Scoring opportunities for both teams were limited, but the Blue Jays found chances late in the game.

Sophomore forward Achim Younker put up a shot in the 51st minute of play after working his way past the Jumbos' defense but unfortunately was unable to find the mark.

Soon after, the Hopkins offense created another threatening attempt in the box, but Tufts' goalkeeper Conner Mieth pounced and stifled their chance at a goal.

The Blue Jay defense, spearheaded by seniors Drew Collins, Jonah Muniz and Mike Swiercz, kept the Jumbos' offense at bay, allowing minimal scoring chances throughout the entirety of the game.

The Jumbos began to pose a threat in the first overtime period, as senior Matt Zinner put a hard shot up towards the Hopkins net. However, the Jays' graduate student goalkeeper Bryan See, stopped the shot with a diving save.

With both teams unable to find the mark after 110 minutes, the winner of the tense Sweet-16 matchup would be decided in penalty kicks.

Hopkins began the shootout with junior midfielder Cole Rosenberger sinking the first shot against Mieth with ease.

His goal put the Blue Jays out in front right off the bat. Tufts was able to tie up the count with the help of midfielder Zach Lane, who snuck one past See.

The Jumbos then put up three unanswered penalty-kick goals, eventually winning 4-1 and advancing to the NCAA Elite Eight.

The Blue Jays finished out their season with a 16-1-4 record, tying the program record for least amount of losses. The 16 wins that the team posted are the most since the 2009 season.

This year's squad hung its hat on its defense, allowing only six goals, an astoundingly low number that tied the school record for goals allowed in a season.

Additionally, the defensive line recorded 16 shutouts, which broke the single-season record for shutouts.

This team spent the season frustrating opposing offenses, a crucial key to their success.

See leaves the Blue Jays as one of the best goalkeepers in the program's history and ranks in the program's top three in career save percentage (0.843), shutouts (28) and wins (39). He points to the defense as one of their strong points this season.

"Our defense has been tremendous all year. Our back line is playing all together in our second year, and we certainly surpassed everyone's expectations," See said. "Setting a school record in shutouts, goals against average and save percentage in a single season, especially with a stronger strength of schedule this season, was definitely something we did not expect."

With only four seniors departing the team, the underclassmen-heavy squad is poised to be in a position to experience even more success within the coming years.

The team was led on the offensive side by Younker, who posted a career-best 17 goals in his second season. Other important players were Centennial Conference Rookie of the Year freshman midfielder RJ Moore and freshman midfielder Alejandro Maclean.

With Moore and Maclean returning next season, the high-powered Blue Jay offense, which posted 45 goals this season, the most since 2007, is in shape to threaten defenses across the Conference for the next couple of years.

See thinks that this season has opened the door for future success for this team.

"Our offense, which was led by a really talented group of underclassmen, has also done really well overall," See said. "They have a couple more years left together, and I'm really excited to see what they can accomplish in the next couple of seasons."

Offensive star Younker echoed this optimistic sentiment.

"Overall, I think we had a really great season. We continuously grew as a team and got better as the season progressed, which is something that I think everyone is happy about," Younker said. "We've set the standard for ourselves and for the program, so all we can do is be excited and work hard for the next season so that we can be even better."

The exciting young team is primed for the coming years and will look to build off of their undefeated Centennial Conference regular season record.

By **ESTHER HONG**  
Sports Editor

The Hopkins men's basketball team has had five consecutive victories to start off the 2017-2018 season. The highlights include a first-place finish in the Rhodes Tip-Off Tournament and a 72-46 win against the McDaniel College Green Terror in the Blue Jays' Centennial Conference opener.

Over Thanksgiving break, the Jays had numerous standout moments. In the Rhodes Tip-Off Tournament championship game, senior forward Kyle Doran scored a career-high 24 points. He was 7-for-9 in the field and 7-for-8 on the line. In addition, Doran grabbed five crucial rebounds in the span of just 23 minutes.

In the highest-scoring game in program history, with a score of 118-104, all five starters including Doran came out of the championship victory against host Rhodes College scoring double figures.

In the Centennial Conference opener, junior guard Michael Gardner tallied a game-high 16 points for Hopkins. He went 6-for-11 from the field and 4-for-4 from the line. Along with his impressive scoring, Gardner had five rebounds in 16 minutes.

The Jays are now 5-0, which marks the first time the Jays have opened their first five games with an undefeated record since the 2006-2007 season. Although many players have had noteworthy performances, the foundation of the team's success is rooted in the efforts of first-year Head Coach Josh Loeffler,

## GET TO KNOW JOSH LOEFFLER: MEN'S BASKETBALL HEAD COACH

who is now the first head coach in program history to win his first five games.

On May 5, 2017, Loeffler was named the head men's basketball coach, succeeding Bill Nelson, who coached the Blue Jays for 31 years. Loeffler graduated from Swarthmore College in 2003 and has been continuously building his coaching career since.

He began coaching at Hamilton College immediately after his college graduation. From there, he became a graduate assistant at St. Lawrence University.

After his impressive recruiting efforts at St. Lawrence, Loeffler joined the Williams College coaching staff, where he helped the team to a runner-up finish in the NCAA Championship.

Loeffler began his head coaching career at the Stevens Institute of Technology, where he guided the Stevens Ducks to a NCAA Sweet 16 appearance and was named the National Association of Basketball Coaches and *D3hoops.com* Atlantic Coach of the Year.

Loeffler stepped up to Division-I positions after his time at Stevens and became the director of basketball operation for Rutgers University for one year and an assistant coach for Lafayette College for four years.

However, Loeffler found comfort in Baltimore, as he

spent the past four seasons as an assistant coach with the Loyola Maryland Greyhounds. During his time at Loyola Maryland, Loeffler recruited Andre Walker, who is the first player in program history to receive a First-Team All-Patriot League honor.

Loeffler spoke with *The News-Letter* about the team's recent success and how he will use his previous coaching experiences to build up the Hopkins program.

*The News-Letter:* Congratulations on the team's recent results. How do you plan to help the

team overcome complacency and the pressures of having a winning record?

**Josh Loeffler:** We focus on getting better every day and having the best day each day that we can have. Hopefully, that keeps us in the moment and looking at what we have to accomplish now as opposed to what our record is or where we stack up against other teams.

**N-L:** What changes have you implemented in the program? How have these changes directly influenced the team's play?

**JL:** We play a different style offensively, and I think we have run a little more than Hopkins has in the past. I would love to see this continue, as I think it's

an exciting style and can be good for us.

**N-L:** What is your coaching philosophy?

**JL:** Coaching philosophy... Oh, that's a good one. Tough question. Try not to screw it up by over coaching, I guess.

**N-L:** How do you plan to grow as a coach throughout the season?

**JL:** I think I am done growing. I have been the same height since I was 14. But if I can get a few more inches, I may be able to intimidate some opposing coaching staffs. As of now, I don't think I strike much fear in our opponents.

**N-L:** Lastly, why Hopkins?

**JL:** Hopkins is an unreal place. I have always thought that this is an institution where I could coach student-athletes who excel in the classroom and on the court, have the resources to compete at the highest level of Division-III and do it in a great city that I love. I am very happy to say that what I thought would be the case with the Hopkins job has proven true. I love it here.



HOPKINSSPORTS.COM  
Head Coach Josh Loeffler

# W. Cross Country defends NCAA championship

By **EMILIE HOFFER**  
Sports Editor

As the rest of the student body was gearing up to go home and finally get some well-deserved sleep during Thanksgiving break, the Hopkins women's cross country team was diligently preparing for the NCAA Championship race. The Blue Jays made their way to Principia College in Elmhurst, Ill. with hopes to defend their second straight NCAA title.

Last year, the Jays took their fourth team title with 128 points, over 70 points ahead of second-place Washington University. The Jays were led by then-senior Tess Meehan and had an incredible 32-second spread between their top five scoring runners of the day.

Two other Blue Jays came home as All-Americans, as well. Then-sophomores Felicia Koerner and Natalia LaSpada, took 29th and 31st, respectively — both of whom would be back to

defend their title in the 2017 season.

The good news for the Jays this year was that they would only graduate Meehan of their top-five runners from the 2016 season. The two other Blue Jays that returned to defend the team's title in Illinois are senior Caroline Smith and junior Ellie Clawson.

This year, it was Clawson that led the pack of Blue Jays to their second straight NCAA Championship. After taking 57th at NCAAAs last year as the Jays' fourth runner, Clawson came back this season nearly a minute faster, despite the 30-mph winds and nearly freezing temperatures.

Running with the front pack from the gun, Clawson completed the 6K course in 20:47.00, less than eight seconds off of the winning time. Clawson crossed the line taking an impressive third place finish — the highest placement by any Hopkins athlete at NCAAAs to date.

Clawson's time is also the best by a Jay at the NCAA

National Championships, bettering that of Meehan from last year by over 20 seconds. Head Coach Bobby Van Allen spoke of Clawson's improvement over the last year, testifying to her hard work and positivity.

"From not being in the top-50 last year to being third this year in a deep field [is] incredible," Van Allen told Hopkins Sports. "She puts in the work and is always positive and always smiling."

Clawson attributed her own success to her coach and her teammates.

"It feels pretty unreal and still hard to grasp honestly. Bobby is an incredible coach, and I put complete faith in his training," Clawson said. "Another thing is the group of women we have this year. This is such a special team. It really helps to have a such a close, supportive, loving, fun group with such positive attitudes."

This time around, the Blue Jays completely blew out the competition. Finishing with a total of 96 team points, nearly 100 points better than second-place University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (191). Washington University in St. Louis followed in third with 202 team points.

"Even with these not ideal conditions, on the line, everyone had such positive attitudes," Clawson said. "I think winning is something everyone had in the back of their heads, but the most important thing for everyone was to try to have their best race and focus on

what they can control."

Two other Blue Jays followed in Clawson's footsteps, finishing in the top 30 and earning All-American status. Junior Natalia LaSpada improved upon her 31st-place finish last year, clocking a time of 21:19.30, which put her at 23rd. Next to cross the line for the Jays was the rookie on the team, freshman Therese Olshanski, who took 29th overall.

Rounding out the Jays' top five were junior Felicia Koerner and sophomore Rebecca Grusby, who finished 42nd and 48th, respectively. The Jays' five scoring runners remained in an impressively tight pack, considering the number of runners in the race, finishing with a 61 second spread.

"This team is also ridiculously talented, which I think helped with everyone's confidence going into the race," Clawson explained. "We pack up in all our workouts and feed off of one another's energy."

In their 11th straight NCAA appearance, not only did Hopkins defend the Championship title, but the Jays have now claimed five of the last six NCAA championships. The Blue Jays trail only the SUNY Cortland and Middlebury College teams that have seven and six NCAA titles, respectively.

Once again, the Jays will only be losing one of their top-five scoring runners — senior Caroline Smith — to graduation this year, meaning they are likely to return as dominant as even in 2018.



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The Blue Jays take home their fifth NCAA championship in six years.

# SPORTS

## DID YOU KNOW?

Junior Ellie Clawson finished in third place at the NCAA Championship cross country race. This is the highest finish ever for a Hopkins runner in the Championship, and her time of 20:47 is the fastest ever run by a Jay in the race.

## CALENDAR

Friday:  
Swimming @ Princeton: All Day

Saturday:  
W. Basketball vs. Muhlenberg: 2 p.m.  
M. Basketball vs. Muhlenberg: 4 p.m.  
Track & Field @ Diplomat Open: All Day

## Women's Soccer loses in NCAA Elite Eight round

By DAVID GLASS  
For The News-Letter

After defeating Wilkes University in the second round of the NCAA Division-III Women's Soccer Tournament, the Hopkins women's soccer team advanced to the Sweet 16 for the ninth time in program history. Hopkins headed to Williamstown, Mass. to face the SUNY Geneseo Knights.

Junior defender Toni Abate was recently placed on the 2017 CoSIDA Academic All-District II Team.

"This year was the best team soccer I have seen us play," she said. "Every player had a large impact on our success."

The Jays got off to a strong start, striking first in the 11th minute. After receiving a pass from senior forward Bailey Monaco, freshman forward Riley O'Toole sent a shot to the back of the net, which was all Hopkins needed.

Two saves from senior goalie Bess Kitzmiller allowed the Blue Jays to maintain a 1-0 lead going into halftime.

Hopkins dominated the second half, outshooting the Knights 9-2.

In the 59th minute, O'Toole netted another goal to put Hopkins up 2-0. The two goals were O'Toole's 14th and 15th of the season, seven of which have been game-winners.

Another goalless half from Kitzmiller secured the shutout and the win for the Jays. It was the team's 15th shutout ever in a NCAA Tournament game.

The victory sent Hopkins to its sixth NCAA Quarterfinals in school history, all of which have come since 2009. The Jays faced home team and sixth-ranked Williams College Ephs.

The Ephs got off to an early lead, scoring in the 17th minute. The goal came off the foot of junior Natalie Turner-Wyatt. Early shot attempts by Abate, sophomore midfielder Carly Lupton-Smith and sophomore midfielder Maggie Coulson were all stopped by the Ephs defense.

Sophomore forward Maddy Rocks had the Jays' first shot on goal, which

was saved by Ephs' junior Olivia Barnhill, and Hopkins headed into the half trailing 1-0.

Williams came out firing after the halftime break, scoring two quick goals, one in the 53rd minute and one in the 58th. Both came from senior Natasha Albanese off of assists from Turner-Wyatt, giving Williams a 3-0 lead. This marks only the second time this season that the Blue Jays have allowed three goals in a game.

Hopkins had a good look in the 64th minute when O'Toole ripped a shot of her own, which Barnhill was again able to stop. The Jays had another scoring opportunity in the 72nd minute when senior forward Michelle Santangelo stepped up for a penalty kick, which ended up going wide.

The three-goal deficit ended up being too difficult to come back from, as the Jays would ultimately fall to the Ephs 3-0.

However, the Jays fought hard, outshooting the Ephs 19-14 and taking 10 corner kicks, while Williams only had one. This is the second consecutive season that Williams has knocked Hopkins out of the tournament.

"I am super proud of our team's tournament run," Abate said. "Although of course I wish we went deeper into the tournament, the team played great soccer in every game. We left it all out on the field."

The Blue Jays finished the season with a record of 18-3-3 and were one win short of making the school's second ever appearance in the NCAA Final Four.

Abate expressed her appreciation for what the seniors have done throughout their successful careers at Hopkins.

"The senior class has set a great example for how to lead the team on and off the field," said Abate. "They've pushed me to be a better player and person. Our goals are to keep working hard to prepare for spring games and for next season."

As for next year, the team knows what they have to do to have another successful season.

## W. Cross Country wins fifth Championship



HOPKINSSPORTS.COM

The Hopkins women's cross country team secured their second consecutive NCAA Championship this season. The win gives the Jays five of the last six championships and puts them in third place all time in terms of total Championships. Junior Ellie Clawson led the way for the Jays. She was the first Jay to finish and finished third overall in the race. The third-place finish is the highest individual finish in Hopkins history.

PAGE B11

## Men's Basketball is 5-0 to start the year

The Hopkins basketball team has opened the new season with five straight wins, the best start since the 2006-07 season. The Blue Jays are led by senior forward Kyle Doran.

PAGE B10

## Get to know Josh Loeffler

Josh Loeffler is the new men's basketball coach. Loeffler is a Swarthmore graduate who has coached at the Division-I level before, most recently as an assistant at Loyola University.

PAGE B11

## Under-the-radar NBA teams

Amid the era of the super-team, there are some middle-of-the-pack NBA teams that fans should not count out. As the season goes on, look for these teams to make surprising playoff runs.

PAGE B10

## Football falls in playoffs on last-second field goal

By BRANDON WOLFE  
For The News-Letter

The Hopkins football team's season came to an end in heartbreaking fashion in the first round of the NCAA playoffs.

The Blue Jays fell to the Washington & Jefferson University Presidents on a 46-yard field goal with just 57 seconds left on the clock to give the Presidents a 31-28 win in Washington, Pa.

After an interception and a fumble ended the first drives by the Presidents and the Blue Jays, respectively, the Presidents would capitalize off the turnover by putting together a seven play, 45-yard drive orchestrated by quarterback Alex Rowse.

Rowse would put Washington & Jefferson's first points on the board with a 16-yard pass to wide receiver Jesse Zubik to give the Presidents a 7-0 lead.

The Blue Jays would strike back on their next drive as sophomore defensive back Patrick Kelly took the ensuing kickoff 61 yards to put Hopkins at the Presidents' 25-yard line.

Washington & Jefferson's defense would allow the Blue Jays' offense just three yards on three plays to force Hopkins to turn to senior kicker Jamie Sullivan, who knocked in a 39-yard field goal to move the game to 7-3.

Attempting to catch the W&J kickoff return

team off guard, the Blue Jays attempted an onside kick that bounced into the hands of a President to give the home team the ball on the Hopkins 47.

Rowse's offense used 10 plays to move the ball into the end zone, with running back Jordan West punching the ball in from two yards out to extend the W&J lead to 11.

Both teams would exchange punts to give Hopkins possession at the start of the second quarter.

The Blue Jays took over from their own 20-yard line and moved the ball deep into President territory.

Sophomore quarterback David Tammaro would gain 16 yards on a run before linking up with junior wide receiver Luke McFadden for a 27-yard gain.

Hopkins would get the ball as deep as the Presidents' eight-yard line. However, they would be forced to kick once again, with Sullivan putting the 25-yard kick through the uprights and putting the score at 14-6.

Both defenses responded strongly, as the remaining 11:36 of the second

quarter went scoreless. The Presidents headed into the locker room at the half holding a 14-6 lead.

Defensive performances on both sides would remain strong as the second half began, with neither offense able to put any points on the board.

That would change midway through the third quarter, however, as senior defensive back Michael Munday intercepted Rowse's pass in the end zone to give the Jays the ball on their own 20-yard line.

Hopkins would use a strong rushing attack catalyzed by senior Ryan Cary as well as a double pass that let senior wide receiver Brett Caggiano find Cary downfield for a 29-yard gain to get the ball to the Presidents' two.

Tammaro would then find the end zone the next play and follow it up with another rush to effectively execute the two-point conversion to tie the game up at 14, all with less than five minutes left in the third quarter.

Washington & Jefferson would get the last laugh in the third quarter as West gained eight, 46 and five

yards on three straight carries to get the ball all the way down to the Hopkins nine-yard line. Rowse eventually found wide receiver Cody Hearst in the end zone as the Presidents reclaimed the lead 21-14.

The Blue Jays would retake possession with just eight seconds left in the third, leaning heavily on the arm of Tammaro.

The sophomore would complete six of his eight throws for 57 yards in the 74-yard drive, including a touchdown pass from 10 yards away to Caggiano, as Hopkins once again tied the game, this time at 21-21.

The Jays would continue to stay hot. On the first play of the Presidents' ensuing drive, junior safety Michael Curry would pick off Rowse's pass to give the Blue Jays the ball back at their own 38-yard line.

Cary would reel in a 29-yard heave from Tammaro along with rushes of five and seven yards before junior running back Tyler Messinger found a crease in the W&J defense. From 21 yards out, Messinger found his way to the end-line, giving the Blue Jays their first lead of the game at 28-21.

Washington & Jefferson would not allow Hopkins to enjoy their lead for long, however, as they put together a seven-play, 68-yard drive capped off with Rowse once again finding Zubik from 12 yards

SEE FOOTBALL, PAGE B10



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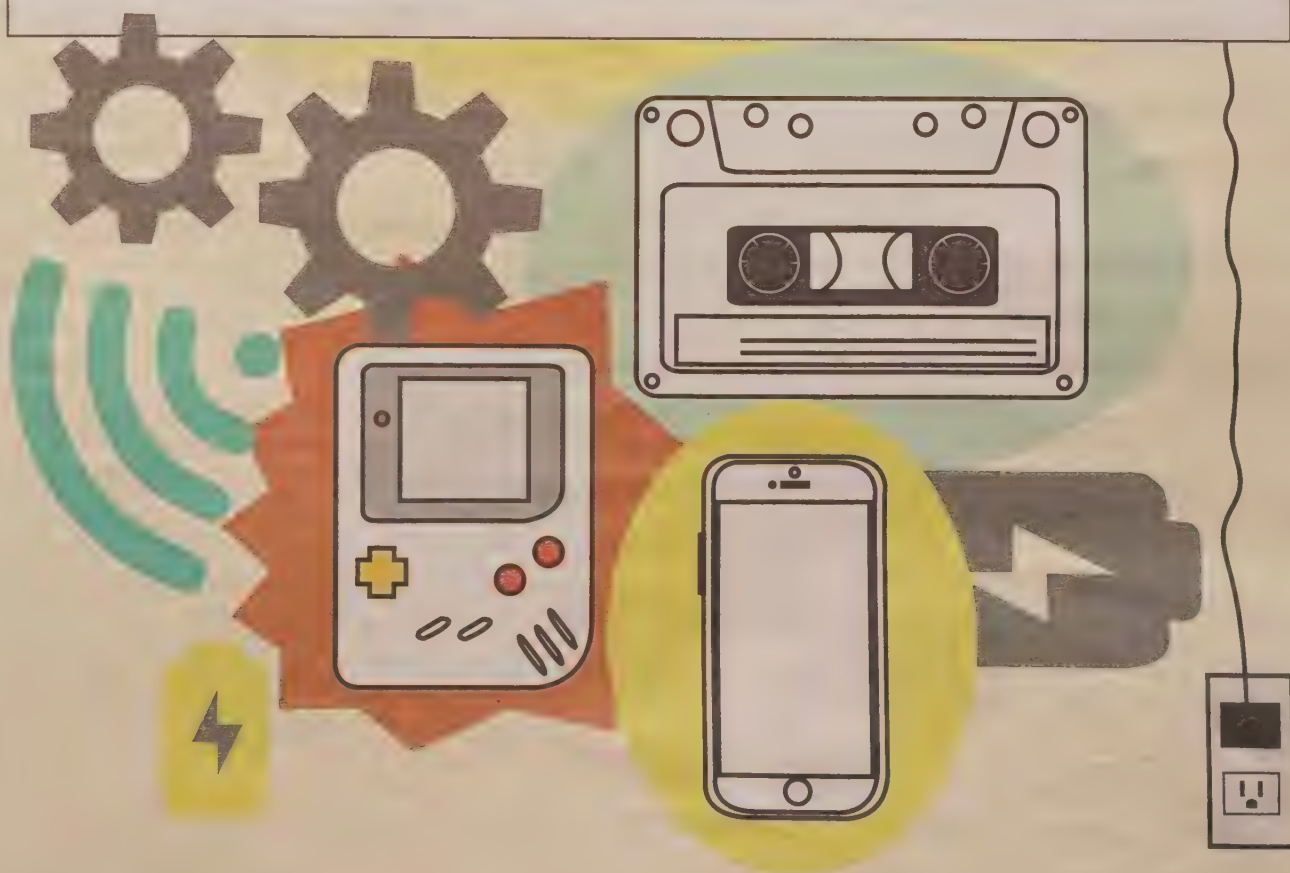
The Jays beat SUNY Geneseo but were defeated by Williams College.

the johns hopkins  
NEWS-LETTER

presents:

the technology issue

# REROUTED





## Letter from the Editor

We at *The News-Letter* wanted to accomplish three things when deciding what theme to follow with this magazine. First, we wanted a subject that would grant us the freedom to write about our contributors' interests. Second, we wanted to curate a diverse collection of articles that would appeal to any reader. And finally, we wanted this magazine to truly represent the here and the now.

It seems obvious now. Technology. It permeates every aspect of our lives, from friendships to romance to art to education to science to sports. Our phones, computers and social media accounts are both a luxury and a necessity. They allow us to stay connected to our friends who live far away, but do they also prevent us from making stronger connections in real life? Do they make it easier or harder to form and maintain romantic relationships?

What was it like before this digital era? How did Hopkins students register for classes, for instance? How would international students stay in touch with their families?

Our writers tackle these questions and more. They examine how we've used and abused technology, along with how it can help make the world better.

In reading this magazine, I hope you learn something. I hope you begin to think differently about how technology affects your life. I hope you consider the good, the bad and the unbelievable.

Welcome to *Rerouted*.

— Gillian Lechuk  
Magazine Editor 2017-2018

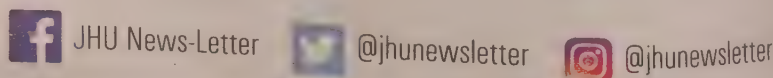
## Rerouted: the technology issue

<i>The News-Letter</i> before computers .....	3	Inside the DMC .....	13
Alumni interviews: tech through the ages .....	4-5	The abusive power of tech corporations .....	14
A day without a phone .....	6	The coming technology apocalypse .....	15
Technology and mental health .....	7	Why is net neutrality important? .....	16
Internet culture in every day life .....	8	Targeted ads on Facebook .....	17
Long-distance romances ....	9	Activism on social media ...	18
Hookup culture and Snapchat .....	10	The Glass Bubble effect ....	19
Stereotypes on Grindr .....	11	Tech and climate change ...	20
<i>Sex and the City</i> in the modern era .....	12	Sports and technology .....	21
		Keeping in touch with family overseas .....	22

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# How was *The News-Letter* made before computers?

By **MORGAN OME**  
News & Features Editor

If you walk inside the *News-Letter* office on a Wednesday night, you will see editors' faces aglow with the light of desktop Mac computers. They will be busy fitting text to Adobe InDesign templates, brightening pictures on Photoshop and converting finished pages into PDFs. Newspaper production today relies so heavily on technology that it is difficult to imagine what the process was like in the past.

Just 30 years ago, *News-Letter* editors produced a paper every week without templates, computers or even the internet. Production was a physical process, according to former Editor-in-Chief Brad Handler, who graduated in 1988.

"You literally were cutting and pasting," he said. "We would sit there and take an exacto plate and cut and lay it in. Sometimes it didn't work so you would have to go print it again. It was clearly not as efficient and neat looking as what you do now."

On the main floor of the office, the editors would use a typesetting machine to print out the text. They would either compose articles directly at the machine or transfer files from floppy disks, a type of disk storage. The machine would print out long strips of text, which were then cut up and brought to the basement.

Editors would spread large, newspaper-sized white sheets of paper over the illuminated, glass top of a light table, and they would arrange ar-

ticles, headlines and photos. Once all the components were precisely aligned, each piece had to be glued down.

The physical laying out of pages could take hours, and if the pieces did not fit together, they would have to print, cut and arrange the text from scratch.

Vandana Kumra, class of 1988, edited the Books section for the paper. After publishers sent in new releases for *The News-Letter*, Kumra would assign writers to review the books, then edit the articles and lay the text out.

"A lot of it was just trying to figure out how to make things fit."

— VANDANA KUMRA  
CLASS OF 1988

"Sometimes, we'd have to change the size of the columns and we had to work with each other to figure out what would go on the first page," she said. "A lot of it was just trying to figure out how to make things fit."

Since laying out each page of the newspaper was a time-intensive task, production was stretched over Wednesday and Thursday nights in time for print on Friday mornings. In the wee hours of Friday morning, Handler and his co-Editor-in-Chief

would place the pages into a large envelope, and a student employee would drive the newspaper out to a printer near Towson.

"As long as we were done by two in the morning, then we would have it back by 7 or 8 a.m.," Handler said.

Frank Wu, class of 1988, wrote a column for *The News-Letter* during his senior year. At the time, most Hopkins students used electric typewriters or notebooks while attending school, and very few had their own personal computers. Wu bought his first computer in the fall of 1987 with money he had saved from working at the *Detroit Free Press* during the summer.

"For *The News-Letter*, I wrote on an Apple Macintosh, using the built-in word processing program," he said. "It hardly had any memory. My iPhone now has 10 times more memory than that first Mac."

At the time, Wu also worked as an editorial assistant at the *Baltimore Sun* where he wrote obituaries and laid out the Sunday weather map. After cutting out the symbols of suns and clouds, he



would use paste to glue them onto a map of the entire country.

Newspapers were often people's fundamental source of information, Wu said, whether they were looking for a weather forecast or just staying up to date on current happenings.

"Everyone read *The News-Letter*," he said. "Every educated person back then read a newspaper."

The future of print journalism is uncertain, with many publications slashing circulation and opting to adopt digital platforms. On Nov. 1 the *City Paper*, an alt-weekly newspaper in Baltimore, printed its last issue after running for 40 years.

Craig Hankin, class of 1976, co-founded the *City Paper* with other *News-Letter* editors. They produced their first issues of the *City Paper* in the Gatehouse.

As an undergraduate, Hankin wrote for the Arts section of *The News-Letter* and was a member of the production crew. For Hankin, being a part of the *News-Letter* community helped him find a community of lifelong friends; he even met his wife at the paper.

Since *The News-Letter* was published twice a week when Hankin was a student, he would stay up late at night to lay out the paper. He enjoyed the process.

"It was very tactile; that's what I liked about it," he said. "You got to stay up all night playing with rubber cement and razor blades — what could be better?"



Rerouted



# The alumni perspective:

4

The Johns Hopkins News-Letter

Rerouted

November 30, 2017



**Name:** Robert Babb  
**Graduation Year:** 1977  
**Major:** History

**What are you doing now?**

I'm the head coach of the varsity baseball team here at Hopkins.

**What role, if any, did technology play in your life at Hopkins?**

The big news then was the invention of the electric typewriter. It made typing papers so much easier.

**How do you think your Hopkins experience**

**would have changed if you were a student today?**

I would have explored Baltimore more, gotten involved in many more social and student activities. Social life was a real dud back then. I would have become friends with many more Hopkins co-eds. My freshman year was the year that the first class of Hopkins women were seniors, having been admitted in 1970, and there were very few women on campus.

The student body is also much larger and more diverse now, providing a student today greater opportunities to learn more about different beliefs and cultures. In addition, the facilities and buildings are so much nicer and more abundant.

**Name:** Susan Kutcher  
**Graduation Year:** 1989  
**Major:** Electrical Engineering

**What are you doing now?**

Now I work for a small company called Brimrose Technology in Sparks, Md. as part of their research and development team. We primarily focus on defense and non-defense R&D programs for U.S. Government agencies like NASA and the Department of Defense.

**What role, if any, did technology play in your life at Hopkins?**

Technology played a small part in my life at Hopkins. In the '80s, during my undergraduate years, very few people had personal computers. So for any computer classes, we would have to access the large mainframe, which was housed in the basement of Garland Hall (and it was huge).

There was one room in Shaffer Hall that was filled with monitors that had remote access to the mainframe (which ran UNIX), and we would all work in there to complete our programming assignments.

Every time we wanted to print out our

work, we would send the command and then have to walk over to the basement of Garland to pick up the printout. It was a lengthy process, especially if you messed something up and had to print multiple times.

During my time at Hopkins as a Master's and PhD student, there were smaller computers (still huge by today's standards) located in different departments, so the monitors for accessing each computer could be located much closer to the actual computer.

The rooms that housed the actual computers had to be kept very cold so that they would not overheat. I remember one of these computers being on the second floor of Latrobe Hall.

There were no word processors around at the time, so most of our papers were written by hand. If we wanted it to look nicer, we would have to find someone with a typewriter.

Doing research also took a lot more time prior to the internet. We had to rely on the books and scientific journals from the library.

Communication was also very different back then, since there was no email or social media.

If we wanted to publicize a meeting or activity, we had to post flyers all over



campus or use the internal Hopkins mail system. Every student had a small mailbox located in the basement of Gilman Hall to receive school mail.

**How do you think your Hopkins experience would have changed if you were a student today?**

I would expect the experience would be very different if I was a student today. I'm sure most assignments would be done using a laptop, and I'm sure many things would be submitted online.

Research would be immensely easier now with the availability of the internet. I think that I would know a lot more about what was happening around campus through social media.



**Name:** Lori Leonard Hardesty

**Graduation Year:** 1996

**Major:** Psychological & Brain Sciences

**What are you doing now?**

In 2016, I completed my Master of Public Administration at the University of Baltimore. After I graduated from Hopkins, I began working for the Shriver Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). The Shriver Center aims to bridge campus and community through engaged scholarship to address critical social challenges. I coordinate Service-Learning at the Shriver Center at UMBC. I instruct a zero-credit Community Service & Learning Practicum, oversee the Shriver Living Learning Community and facilitate the France-Merrick Scholarship Program.

**What role, if any, did technology play in your life at Hopkins?**

It really blows my mind to think about the limited role technology played in my Hopkins career. My roommate Sara Farber and I both had our Apple IIe PCs but did much of our work at the Computer Lab. The vending machine down the hall stored and produced many cans of Coke and Snickers, which got me through some really late nights. Back then, we referred to the internet as "the world wide web."

In one computer class, I learned how to send an email — I had a really hard time un-

derstanding this abstract concept. My friends were not sending emails but writing letters. Research was done the old fashioned way — through the card catalog at the library. Now, you can do it from anywhere, at anytime.

To register for classes, we went in person to the Registrar's Office, sometimes standing in long lines. We submitted papers to professors in class (with the occasional slip-it-under-their-door-and-pray-that-they-wouldn't-take-off-too-many-points-for-being-late). There was no Blackboard.

The mystery of how to catch up with friends was just a way of life. Phone calls were only made from and received in our dorm room, where we were often not. We took bets on whose parent called when we saw the blinking light of the answering machine. Sara and I had fun making our outgoing message — the one with Madonna's "Like a Virgin" playing in the background was featured for a long time. I would go to B-level to study, wondering who might be there. Who would be at the dining hall? Were my volleyball or basketball teammates already on their way to the Athletic Center to ice ahead of time before practice or a game?

**How do you think your Hopkins experience would have changed if you were a student today?**

Technology can increase the speed and capacity for connection. Clicking "post" will instantly share my good news, embarrassing moments or frustration with hun-



dreds of people. Connecting with fellow alumni can be done at any time of the day or night without disturbing anyone's sleep or work schedule, no matter where they are on the globe.

But never underestimate the power of touch: shaking hands or the best hug ever. Familiar smells bring great memories: a special perfume your friend wears or cookies in the oven while sitting at the kitchen table. Non-verbal communication is really powerful: understanding when someone is frustrated or angry because of crossed arms or furrowed brows. The opportunity to have a real-time, back-and-forth dialogue can easily clear up a misunderstanding rather than being confused by how an email/text/post is worded, punctuated or capitalized. Listening to understand another's perspective that might be different from your own and keeping an open mind can be transformative. Perhaps the college students of today have less developed senses? Will you Google that?



**Name:** Brendan Hong

**Graduation Year:** 2017

**Major:** Behavioral Biology, Psychological & Brain Sciences

**What are you doing now?**

I am a scribe for an internal medicine doctor at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians.

**What role, if any, did technology play in your life at Hopkins?**

Technology played a huge role during

my time at Hopkins in allowing me to communicate with others and stay organized. I was able to easily collaborate with others and have easy access to documents, which helped me succeed as a student.

**How do you think your Hopkins experience would have changed if you were a student today?**

In regards to how technology has changed, I only graduated a few months ago, so I haven't seen any drastic technological changes that would have significantly enhanced my college experience.

How has technology changed Hopkins?

5

Rerouted



# No Phone Day: 24 hours without my phone

By **DIVA PAREKH**  
Copy Editor

Signing up for an article for this magazine on our idea spreadsheet, one title jumped out at me. “No Phone Day.” I told my roommates about it, and they just didn’t believe I would go through with doing it. Honestly, I almost didn’t.

It took me about three weeks to attempt to pick the perfect day to spend completely phone-less, at the end of which I realized there was no perfect day. There were days when I had to study for tests or turn in problem sets, and to do that I’d need to at least be able to communicate with my study group. There were days filled with meetings that I couldn’t afford to miss simply because I didn’t have my phone to remind me.

Three weeks passed. There was not a single day that seemed feasible, until of course, the deadline for this article started to loom over my head.

At about 8 p.m. the night before, I handed my phone over to my roommate and told her to keep it for the next 24 hours. Just before I went to sleep, I realized all my alarms were on my phone, so I had to borrow my roommate’s little pink alarm clock to make sure I woke up.

I have undoubtedly never fallen asleep as fast as I did that night. Granted, I had an allergic reaction

a few hours earlier for which I had taken two Benadryls, but it may also have been because I didn’t have the opportunity to mindlessly scroll through my phone before actually passing out.

When I woke up, it hit me that I had no way of telling time because I didn’t own a watch. Who needs a watch when you have a phone that’s always with you, and all you have to do is look at the screen to get an update of not only the time but also your entire schedule?

So naturally I roamed around campus that day with that same little pink alarm clock in my coat pocket, whipping it out every single time I wanted to know just how late I was going to be to my next class.

I spent all day being cold because I couldn’t check the weather app on my phone before deciding what to wear. I tried to do it as they did in the old days and just stick a finger out the window, but clearly my finger thought it was warmer than the rest of me did.

My Monday already felt completely abnormal and bizarre, and it wasn’t even lunchtime yet. I felt so disorganized and on edge.

Now usually I text my friend before Monday lunch and confirm where we’re meeting, but that was out of the question, so I just went to the same place as usual, but he wasn’t there. I figured plans had changed, but how was I to know? So I ate lunch alone and read a book while I ate.

A part of me really enjoyed that. It had been so long since I had just sat down to a meal and a book, and I missed that, but I also felt like I was missing out on time with my friends.

It was an odd feeling, like I was detached from everyone else.

Later, I was just walking somewhere, and I ran into somebody one of my friends and I dislike. I don’t see this friend everyday, but we try to keep in touch. I reached into my pocket to grab my phone and text her saying I saw him so we could rant about him as usual. Whoops. There was just a little pink alarm clock in there.

That lingered in my mind as a missed opportunity to reconnect with someone I don’t see all the time but whose company I still enjoy. The memory of the run-in faded, and I never told her about it. It wasn’t a big deal: Of all the moments in my life, this was a fairly insignificant one. But I still felt like I’d lost something.

In one of my classes, a different friend seemed upset. When that happens I usually text her about it later, and we have a long conversation about it. I didn’t see her again that day; we never talked about whatever she was going through. And I felt like I was being a bad friend, like I couldn’t be there for people even if I wanted to.

All day, I felt strangely on edge. I had this nagging feeling that there was some important text or email that I wasn’t answering, that there was a friend who thought I was ignoring them, that there was something I had to do that I hadn’t because my phone wasn’t there to remind me. I felt like I couldn’t rely on myself and my memory.

Sure enough, when I got my phone back, there was an overwhelming influx of information and things I’d missed throughout the day. The way my life is structured, with *News-Letter* and admissions and research and all my work being done in study groups, there will always be a million things I need to keep track of and a million people I need to be in communication with.

Maybe over the summer, the experience would have been different. But during the semester, with the

way work and responsibilities pile up, it was more stressful than anything else.

The next day, though, I felt a change in the way I was behaving. To put it simply, just that one-day break took away my instinct to constantly have my phone in my hand.

I was in class, looking at my notes from my day without a phone, and they were amazing — so detailed, so much better than my normal notes. I felt like I’d actually understood everything I wrote down, because I was absorbing information between breaks in the professor talking, instead of just checking my phone.

This isn’t to say that I was miraculously paying attention for every minute of my three-hour lecture because I didn’t have a phone. No, I was doodling. I was daydreaming. It’s been so long since I’ve doodled, I forgot how much fun it was. I found a page of random article ideas in my notebook from Monday, ideas that popped into my head because I was daydreaming instead of scrolling through videos on strange animal interactions or how to make that perfect fudgy brownie.

Would I have done this if I didn’t have to for this article? Probably not. Will I do it again? Probably not. With the way our culture works, people expect responses, whether it’s friends or it’s colleagues, and I couldn’t get by with just going off the grid and ignoring them.

But if you can, I’d encourage you to just take a day. One day is all it takes to become so much more conscious of the way you use your phone. Even with my phone back, I’m now making a conscious effort not to check it during class, to use a notebook instead of a laptop.

I realized I’d forgotten what it felt like to be bored. With constant entertainment and gratification literally at my fingertips, I’d forgotten what it felt like to daydream and get lost in my own head.



COURTESY OF DIVA PAREKH

This little pink alarm clock was the only way Parekh could tell time.



# How social media affects mental health

By JEANNE LEE  
Layout Editor

**M**y parents gave me my first cellphone when I entered the sixth grade.

"We're giving you this so we know when to pick you up after school," they told me. "Don't get too carried away!"

It was a mistake.

At first, the pink Motorola Razr flip phone in the palm of my hand felt like a sacred gift. The silky smooth metal surface was like a gem. The buttons were so satisfying to press, and the bright screen was so luring.

Fast forward to a few days later, and I was exuberantly texting my friends under my bed covers until midnight. My parents were probably oblivious to how dangerous the device they had entrusted me with was. I would wake up groggy the next morning, too tired to go to school. My phone was slowly consuming me.

Fast forward to my college years, and I'm still lying on my bed with my cell phone, scrolling through Facebook and watching Tasty cooking videos. Only now, my roommate on the bed next to me is doing the same. Although the clock tells me that it's time to go to sleep, I reassure myself that this is normal.

There's no denying it: We are constantly surrounded by technology. From writing essays on our laptops to texting friends on our smartphones, our daily activities consist of an unavoidable use of technological devices. As these devices have evolved to become more integral in our lives, we too have evolved.

We spend less time taking part in outdoor activities and more time sitting at our desks. We meet up with fewer people in person and interact with more people through social media. How have these changes affected our mental health? How has technology both positively and negatively affected our well being?

## The negatives:

Social media makes up a pretty big portion of our overall technology use. Using Facebook, Instagram and other forms of social media has been found to cause negative psychological effects. A study by Duke University this year found that a greater use of technology among children led to problems such as ADHD and anger management issues.

Psychological research has shown that the excessive use of Facebook has led to feelings of deep jealousy and depressive thoughts in teens. It has led to the practice of comparison. How many times have we scrolled through our newsfeed and compared other people's success to our own lives? Social media use also decreases the face-to-face interactions that are important to daily life.

Using social media and other forms of technological entertainment has also been linked to addiction. According to various surveys conducted in the U.S. and around the world, a majority of the global population suffers from smartphone addiction. Over half of the population becomes pensive when they accidentally leave their phones at home for the day. A majority of the population also panics when a "low battery" alert pops up on their screens.

Technology is also making our brains slower. The immediate access to Google at the tip of our fingers makes it less necessary to memorize facts. Navigation tools significantly deteriorate our spatial memory. Taking pictures makes it easier to forget the very moments we want to cherish. It has led the population to suffer from a "Digital Amnesia."

Technology also affects us biologically. While laptops and cell phones entertain us before we go to bed, they also can lead to sleeping problems. Researchers have found that being exposed to bright screens before going to bed suppresses the secretion of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin, making it difficult to fall

asleep. If we are not careful with our habits, our circadian rhythm can become significantly affected.

## The positives:

Yet, there have been numerous ways in which technology has helped mental health. For example, connecting with friends through social media has been found to help cope with depression and anxiety. The 2017 Duke study found that although social media did cause jealousy and envy, it also helped teens cope with depression. Social media does allow people to connect with each other, even if not in person. It prevents people from completely isolating themselves.

There have also been many innovative ways in which technology has assisted mental health. It has changed the way our country provides mental health resources, especially in terms of suicide prevention. People can call for assistance and support in times of emergency. Crisis centers can reach more people to prevent suicides from occurring.

The rising popularity of mental health apps creates more convenient ways to seek help. These apps can help patients connect with professionals or help users cope with anxiety. Some apps are used as mood boosters by displaying positive messages on users' phones throughout the day. Other apps can observe addicts' behavior by tracking their location. For instance, going to a store to purchase alcohol can set off a prompt. Hopkins has encouraged the use of the Calm app to assist students with stress relief. Calm users have access to various breathing exercises and sounds of nature to help them focus or sleep. Apps are also useful for public health through data collection, and technological research to help mental health continues to expand.

While technology may have caused issues with mental health, it also has the potential to be a possible solution. As college students, let's try our best to use technology in moderation.



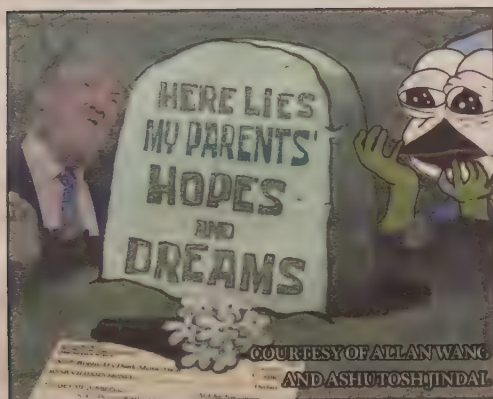
PUBLIC DOMAIN  
*Wheat Field with Cypresses* by Vincent  
Van Gogh

Rerouted



# How social media influences culture and language

By KATIE TAM  
Copy Editor



The creation of AS.300.304, aka “Hopkins/Memes/Lost Hopes and Dreams,” seems to embody the influence that internet culture has had on our generation. As college students, we’re connected to the internet almost every second of every day, whether it be through social media sites like Snapchat and Facebook or through more academically-related pages like Blackboard. Accordingly, this has significantly shaped the ways in which we speak and act in everyday life.

Social media is a major facet of internet culture and has greatly impacted how we interact with one another. For instance, the introduction of streaks on Snapchat has made it so the app has become a ubiquitous part of most peoples’ daily routine. Even Hopkins Dining has gotten in on the action: The Great Dining Streak Challenge encourages students to keep a streak with the Hopkins Dining account in order to receive a free meal pass.

Personally, social media has allowed me to stay connected to friends I might not otherwise have, especially those back home. I like seeing small snippets of my friends’ lives, and I enjoy sharing pieces of my life with them too. The internet allows me to do that and stay connected with family and friends across the country and even the world.

Social media helps nurture the growth of another major part of our internet culture. Students at Hopkins (evidenced by the inspiration for the aforementioned meme class) seem to like to post to the Facebook meme page while procrastinating on their work. Memes are a big part of internet culture and can often come up as casual references in our conversations.

For instance, my dorm floor freshman year often got together to play Cards Against Humanity. Write-ins on the blank white cards often had something to do with Harambe when that meme was at its peak. Popular memes often become pop culture references that are considered common knowledge in everyday speech. Memes aren’t the only thing influencing our language, English itself has changed, thanks to the way we speak to each other online.

The way we speak to each other online is vastly different from how we do in face-to-face conversations. Words like “tea” or “snake” can take on different meanings depending on context and/or the emojis used. Sentences can also take on different shades of meaning, depending on grammar.

Choosing to capitalize Certain Words in a sentence or using no caps at all has meaning. Keyboard smashing random strings of characters has meaning. Ending a somewhat somber

or otherwise neutral sentence with “lol” has meaning. I know I tend to use “lol” or “haha” as their own forms of punctuation. They connote a sense of casualness and help decrease the tension in a sentence with a tone that may be otherwise hard to read.

The way we speak online also takes the use of metaphors to another level. When someone claims to be “trash,” we know exactly what they mean by it. Although usually only those embedded in our generation’s internet culture would comprehend such a phrase, the level of understanding is still pretty amazing. We all have communities within the internet that we choose to engage with, whether it be Reddit, Twitter or Tumblr. Each takes advantage of these distinct idiosyncrasies in the use of language.

The way we communicate on the internet has allowed us to recognize unique ideas in ways that are hard to do in person. Languages are meant to change and evolve as people find new ways to express ideas. They reflect the people who used them, and the internet allows new forms of written language to show the same.

While most of what I’ve written so far has to do with how the internet has influenced the more casual ways we interact with one another, more serious methods of communication have also been influenced by our internet culture. The internet isn’t just a place with cat videos and memes, it’s a resource filled with millions of places to learn. From the *Euthanasia Coaster* to toilet paper orientation, you can read about almost anything on the internet (and yes, those are real Wikipedia pages).

As such, the internet has become a useful tool when fact checking things like news sources, speakers or that one video you saw on Facebook. The ease of accessing information has made finding sources to back up people’s claims relatively simple. Theoretically, this should make the information we spread to one another more accurate, although your results may vary on that. The widespread use of smartphones also makes it easier than ever to double check the accuracy of information we see. Our internet culture already embraces social media, memes and the modification of the English language. Given how easy the internet has made it, fact checking should also be added to that list.

Our internet culture, like the internet itself, is always changing. Whether through casual references to the latest meme or through finding sources to corroborate claims in an essay, our internet culture has and will continue to influence the way we communicate and interact with one another, both in person and online.

Rerouted



**Y**ou never expect you'll be in a long-distance relationship until you're in one. And then there you are, with all that it entails: laying in the dark with your face warmed by the light of a pixelated screen; or holding your phone up to the sky because a strong signal is your lifeline to that person halfway across the world.

Man, hasn't technology made relationships easier? I can only imagine that before technology, in the era of pigeons and mailmen, the wait must've been agonizing.

But now you can say "I love you" in real time, as long as your network connectivity is solid. You can be sitting on the toilet and find thousands of hot people in your area by opening up an app. Or maybe technology has made relationships harder. Someone can break up with you without even talking to you in person, leaving you to realize only when you check your phone to see the "it's not you, it's me" text.

When I look back at my first real relationship, I see it through a prism of FaceTime calls, texts and occasional visits. We met online and broke up online. He went to school in New Jersey and I went to school in Baltimore. Without the glorious world of online dating, I never even would've met him.

We talked a lot about technology in that relationship. Wasn't it fate that we both somehow happened to be in the same 10-mile radius for a brief instant, so that our online paths crossed? Wasn't it crazy and amazing that we could see each other and talk to each other in real-time every day? Wow, wasn't technology great?

It really wasn't. We'd FaceTime and call, only to spend hours talking about how excited we were to see each other next. No amount of seeing someone's pixelated face compares to holding them in your arms. My default feeling when it came to that relationship was anticipation, and our love blossomed on the promises of "next time." I was in a perpetual state of limbo, where my digital life was inseparably tied to my romantic life. In fact, my romantic life was my digital life.

It was a strange form of masochism, denying myself from seeing someone for so long until the next moment I could. For months, I stood at the precipice of a fulfilling relationship that never came.

Towards the great fizzle-out at the end of the relationship, I was distraught. So many people I knew were in successful long-distance relationships. What was I doing wrong? If I cared about

someone, shouldn't the FaceTime calls and text messages and occasional visits be enough? Why was I being so selfish?

But I'd forgotten about the ugly. When it came to me and my ex, technology emboldened us to be more cruel. At the end, when I was alone in my room with only my phone held up to my ear, he would cut through me with his words, made cold and impersonal by the miles between us and the static of the phone.

We would let our anger simmer long after our phone calls and text combatively through all hours — while eating dinner, while hanging out with our friends, while staying up late into the night. When our connection would cut out or I hit "do not disturb" on my phone at the end of the day, I'd be grateful. I needed some sort of reprieve.

There it was, the double-edged sword: technology with its way of creating instant closeness but also its way of making draining and hurtful situations inescapable.

Today, in my current relationship, there's little FaceTiming since we both attend Hopkins.

But without a doubt, when he was on the West Coast and I was on the East Coast last summer, that was the rockiest part of our relationship. Maybe it was because it reminded me so vividly of the turbulence of long distance, tech and love from my first relationship.

As we hurdle rapidly towards a more digitally connected world, I find myself afraid for the state of human connection. There's a certain back-to-the-basics simplicity in talking at length with someone in person, beyond just texting or Snapchatting them 24/7. I long for it all the time, and I also long to be released from the pressure of having to be in constant contact with others.

Back home in Pennsylvania, my friend Maggie and I would often go hiking in the woods, where we'd have no cell phone reception. Every time we approached a particular ravine on the trail, she would turn to me, her eyes twinkling.

"What if we just threw our phones off the ravine?" she'd ask. "I feel like it'd be satisfying."

I don't think the collective destruction of our phones and laptops is the answer. But I hope that we don't forget the value of finding peace and space outside of the digital realm. Without first prioritizing human company, who will we even connect and keep in touch with online?

# Long distance: my ex-relationship through a screen

By **KELSEY KO**  
Managing Editor

**You can say "I love you" in real time, as long as your network connectivity is solid.**



COURTESY OF KELSEY KO



COURTESY OF KELSEY KO

Rerouted



# Hookups in the age of Snapchat

By JACQUI NEBER  
Opinions Editor

I wanted to formally interview my peers for this piece, but people aren't especially open to talking about their hookup experiences on this campus. I had to dig into what my friends thought by asking deep and nosy questions about their sex lives. I had to complicate things by asking about technology. It was eye-opening. Here's what I learned:

Hookup culture exists, and it's normal, and it can be dissatisfying, and we all know that. Beyond the obvious, I heard a lot about the intersection between technology and hooking up: the parallels between how you feel about someone and how you choose to communicate with them.

Full disclosure: The person I talk to the most — I mean text all the time, telling each other about our days as we move through them — is my mom. I text all my friends throughout the day too, but I'm always checking in on my mom, and vice versa. I also call my family on Sundays. A lot of people do the same with their parents, and that constant communication is what I presume it's like to talk to someone you're in a relationship with.

But when you're just hooking up with someone, and feelings aren't supposed to be involved, you only communicate with them when you

want something to happen. I'm guilty of this, and you probably are too. And you're not necessarily going to call. You might text or, more likely, you're going to send a snap — something that disappears as quickly as it comes into existence.

The impermanence of Snapchat as a means of communication is something everyone on campus seems to understand. My sources spoke to the ability to keep secrets through snapping people instead of talking to them through other platforms.

It makes sense, even if I've never realized it: You can have a meaningful conversation through chat, but once it disappears, it feels like all the sentiment between you and the other person does too.

One of my friends defined Snapchat as the "root of all evil" when it comes to keeping things casual, keeping people at a distance and keeping things a secret. This is because you can send whatever you want as a snap, and it will disappear. You blink, and it's gone. For better or worse, there's less meaning there and less consequence to your words and whether or not they translate into action.

You can keep secrets from a hookup partner and even keep that partner a secret from your friends. There's a toxicity here that feels very specific to social media and very specific to a culture that has existed for decades before social media did.

Snapchat is only one platform of communication in the arsenal available to college kids who want to see each other after being out on Fridays, Saturdays or Tuesdays. You Snapchat your hookups to hook up, but you're not texting them throughout the day. You're not constantly updating them on your daily life.

You could spend months with someone and never get to know them beyond what you discuss in person. You could feel like you really know someone but eventually discover that you do not.

How you feel about someone can parallel what you use to talk to them — and it often does — but sometimes it's hookup culture itself that controls how you communicate. You might still stick to Snapchat if you're developing feelings for someone, because that is what campus culture deems normal and appropriate. You might want to text someone

throughout the day but not know how to communicate with them in the daytime.

You might be prone to overthinking things, like me, and find casual communication hard when all you want to do is talk about things that actually matter and talk about them even when you're not together in the same room. You might stand in your own way in taking something from a hookup to a relationship, just because you're afraid to talk to the other person.

I had to talk to a lot of people to realize that as much as technology complicates hooking up, the biggest villain in hookup culture is fear.

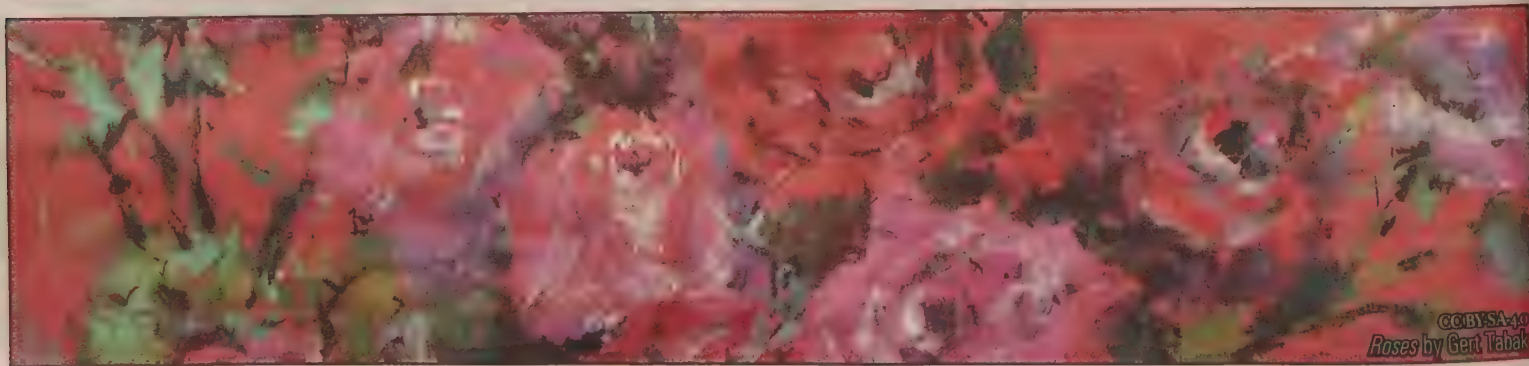
The technology you use can parallel how you feel about someone. Two people could feel trapped in the claws of a form of communication that perpetuates a feeling of insignificance and disappearance. I don't have a solution to this, because it has definitely happened to me.

Methods of communication present us with stereotypes for their usage that are hard to break. I think getting past them is about courage. It's saying what you feel and doing what you say, whether that means making moves to turn a hookup into something more or making sure your hookup stays a hookup. Every experience can be valuable if you let it be valuable. Every person, too, is valuable. It just requires courage to break barriers and show them that they are.

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**The impermanence of Snapchat as a means of communication is something everyone understands.**

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Rerouted

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The Johns Hopkins News-Letter

November 30, 2017



# Gay hookup app Grindr maintains harmful stereotypes

By JACOB TOOK  
News & Features Editor

**J**ake. Eighteen years old, six feet and one inch, 195 pounds. Average body type. White. Single. Twink. I'm looking for Chat, Friends or Right Now. HIV-negative, last tested December 2016.

That's what guys who found me on Grindr would have read about me before I finally deleted my account this summer. Believe me, that was a long time coming.

Grindr is an app, sometimes referred to as a Tinder for gay men, which essentially provides a platform through which gay men can connect with one another. A fundamental difference between Grindr and Tinder, however, is that Grindr is almost exclusively designed for hookups.

Hookup culture may be present on college campuses, but it runs rampant within the LGBTQ community, particularly among gay men. Grindr facilitates a lot of that, with a streamlined process built around different labels that allow users to filter through different profiles based on what they're looking for.

In the LGBTQ community, hooking up also has a more complicated history and is deeply rooted in (surprise) the general homophobia and oppression queer Americans experienced during the late 20th century.

During that time, gay men were typically unable to express romantic attraction openly and were instead forced to connect to one another through hookups that were almost always sexual in nature. This in part led to the largely harmful perception that gay men are hypersexual and also normalized the fetishization of gay sex, typically for straight women.

This might be a good place to add that I'm writing this as a gay man. I'm writing about the experiences of gay men, and I don't want

to speak on how other queer groups fit into this absurd hookup system, because I haven't lived those experiences.

But as a gay man, I've had plenty of experience with Grindr. For the most part, Grindr caters to cisgender gay men, and in a perfect world, it would be a place where gay guys could all be happy and friendly and gay together.

In reality, Grindr shatters this blissful gay utopia with a system of labels that are, at best, anxiety-inducing and, at worst, enforcing historically harmful stereotypes about gay men and wider perceptions of the LGBTQ community.

Grindr operates on a system of labels that force users to define themselves and their sexuality in a few words. Something as basic as body type (mine is "average") already reflects the general lack of body positivity in the gay community. Users can sort through guys to find only those with "slim" or "muscular" bodies, excluding anyone whose body type is deemed less acceptable by society.

Then, of course, users select their "tribe" (for the purposes of this article, I'm not even going to start on the problematic use of that term). But the "tribes" on Grindr allow for the further divisions of the gay community, which are still often based on body type, but now they include masculinity or femininity.

For example, a "twink" (the label I usually use, though I'm not sure how strongly I identify with it) is typically a younger gay guy with more feminine attributes. Body type comes into play here, because if you fit that description but have a bigger build, you may be a "cub." Users with that label (inevitably tied to their weight) might typically be more masculine.

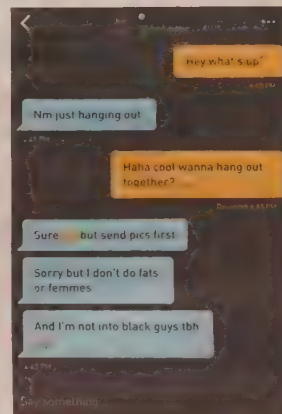
"Cub" also bears negative implications on age, as "cubs" are generally considered young. "Bears" refers to an older, more mascu-



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Grindr perpetuates detrimental and dangerous prejudices that plague our community.

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line and usually bigger guy. And there are more — "daddy," "jock" or "leather." I can't decide which is a more problematic "tribe": "poz" (referring to an HIV-positive status) or "trans" (forcing all transgender guys on the app to label themselves).

These are a few of the labels on Grindr, but it's not as if there's a label for every type of guy on the app. Instead, most users are left struggling to figure out exactly how to identify themselves.

Grindr's labels are a double-edged sword. They leave many users unsure on how to label themselves, and they also allow others to filter through the app based on body type, "tribe," age or even race.

Please let that sink in.

A Grindr user can search exclusively for 18-year-old white twinks with slim body types.

To Grindr's credit, this year they added a section in which users can identify their HIV status as something other than a "tribe" and have made a greater effort to connect users with sexual health resources and encourage safe sex practices.

Still, didn't remove that "poz tribe" though, did they?

There is a laundry list of different prejudices that Grindr's system reinforces in expecting users to label themselves and then allowing others to sort through those labels: racism, transphobia, fatphobia, stigma against those living with HIV, negative expectations of masculinity and femininity in gay men, unhealthy dynamics between younger and older gay men.

Did Grindr create these problems? Of course not.

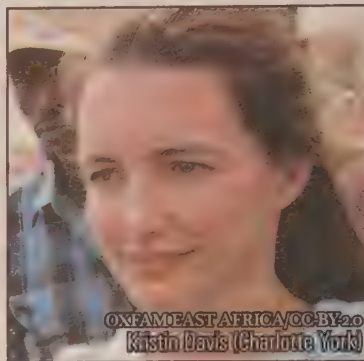
But its focus on using these labels to identify users is not helping us eradicate these problems from the gay community.

I condemn the app not because I disapprove of hookup culture, but because Grindr perpetuates detrimental and dangerous prejudices that plague our community.

Rerouted



# Binge-watching *Sex and the City* in 2017



By KATHERINE LOGAN  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

I first tried watching *Sex and the City* (SATC) a couple of years ago. As a fan of Darren Star's latest fun, if at times oddly-paced, show *Younger*, I figured I was likely to enjoy its fashion-forward and more mature cousin even more.

Yet, when I queued up the first episode on HBO Go, I couldn't get past the late-'90s fashion, the slang and the way they talked about sex. As much as I love Sarah Jessica Parker (and her shoes), it all seemed so ridiculously outdated.

Cut to two years later: SJP and Kim Cattrall are feuding over the third SATC movie failing to make it to the production stage (#sad), and I'm as big of a Carrie Bradshaw fan as anyone.

What changed? Maybe it was that I could finally bring myself to admit that the brand of idealized, almost *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*-esque friendship portrayed on screen is one that the majority of women, myself included, crave.

Or perhaps it's because in fashion, as trends come and go, what was outdated quickly feels relevant again. In this case, the past few seasons have seen a rebirth of grunge and other '90s styles. Whether in a frat basement or at an upscale restaurant, you're likely to spy at least one woman wearing a choker, something with a camo print or a slinky velvet slip dress fit for a young Kate Moss.

But I think that the key reason is

one I only discovered after getting hooked, that despite being created long before the advent of streaming sites like Netflix, Hulu and HBO Go, SATC is perfectly designed for binge-watching.

Unlike some of HBO's other shows, which require a greater time commitment, each episode of SATC is bite-sized: only a half hour long. This makes them perfect for putting on in the background while you're eating lunch or taking a late-night study break.

While shows like Netflix's *BoJack Horseman*, Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale* or HBO's *The Leftovers* may leave you with existential questions and an even more overwhelming sense of dread at the thought of facing the day, SATC wraps up each episode in a neat little (usually punny) bow.

This same lightheartedness also lends itself to viewers being able to watch multiple episodes in a row without having to pause to digest what they've just witnessed. However bleak things might appear, you know that Carrie, Miranda, Samantha and Charlotte are going to be okay, and by extension, you have greater faith that just maybe you are too.

The character of Samantha is an obvious girl power go-to. She refuses to be slut shamed by her friends, the men she sleeps with or passersby on the street. She's also a PR boss that can put anyone (male or female) in their place. Samantha is a modern woman who is unafraid to take control in the boardroom or the bedroom. Not gon-

na lie, that's pretty rad.

Miranda is also pretty badass. She works as a high-powered lawyer, refuses to lower her standards for anyone and would be voted "Most Likely to Subvert Gender Norms" if this show had superlatives. Even if it's sometimes to her disadvantage, she is a fantastic foil to the stereotypical "hysterical" view of femininity.

Charlotte, though definitely on the more conservative side, refuses to allow herself to be pigeonholed into the Madonna-whore complex. She may play by the rules, but they're rules that embody her values. Ultimately, she can throw them away without much shame at the drop of a hat.

Then, of course, there is our narrator and the true protagonist of the show, Carrie Bradshaw. Regardless of who you get assigned on whatever online quiz you take, just admit it, pretty much everyone wants to be a Carrie.

Carrie is unapologetic and at times blunt about her sexuality. I'd have to imagine that if SATC was set in today's times, Carrie would either have a killer lifestyle blog (minus the DIYs/recipes) or help bring back *The News-Letter's* *Orgasmic Chemistry* column. Either way I'd definitely be following her Instagram.

Whether you identify as a Miranda, Samantha, Charlotte or Carrie, chances are you'll go through phases where you're totally frustrated with each of their life decisions over the course of the show. Unlike when the show was originally airing, by streaming it today you can choose

to skip the less juicy episodes and avoid the pain of waiting to find out what's going to happen next. It's like a choose-your-own-adventure full of immediate gratification.

You can also choose when to take a break from SATC without FOMO. Back in the day, if you missed an episode, unless you were one of relatively few to have TiVo, you were out of luck.

Now, with all the episodes available online 24/7, you can build your own watching schedule. Viewers aren't beholden to networks in the same way, a welcome development for those of us at Hopkins with packed schedules.

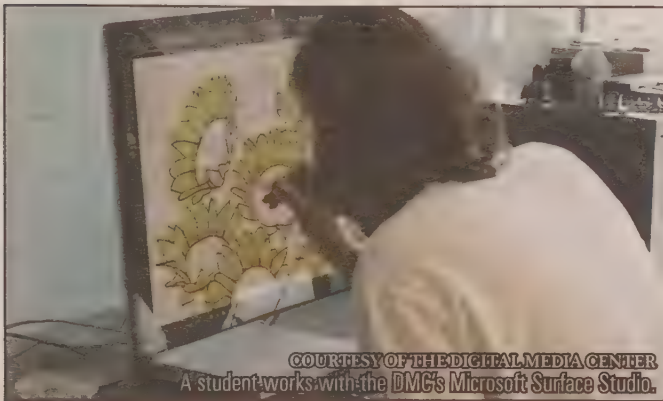
Episode after episode, SATC has helped fill the New York City-sized hole in my heart since I left my not-quite-as-sexy summer internship in the city. It epitomizes the intoxicating feeling of the limitlessness of being single in a locale where there's always something exciting to do. Yet, it also embraces the sometimes pervasive sense of loneliness, of wanting to share those experiences with someone else too.

As much as it's a kind of time capsule, SATC is also a portrait of a city whose atmosphere has remained the same even as its various neighborhoods have gone in and out of style.

Next time you're in dire need of a lighthearted, binge-watching experience, get your HBO password from your parents and give SATC a try. While it may take a couple of episodes for you to warm up to it, you're sure to be hooked.



# The DMC combines technology with art



COURTESY OF THE DIGITAL MEDIA CENTER  
A student works with the DMC's Microsoft Surface Studio.



COURTESY OF THE DIGITAL MEDIA CENTER  
The DMC hosted an event where students could make their own buttons.

By **SABRINA CHEN & PAIGE FRANK**  
Science & Technology Editors

Over Halloween weekend, students gathered in the Mattin courtyard to drop pumpkins off the second floor balcony, make their own masks and engage in some intense gaming competitions. The annual game night was hosted by the Digital Media Center (DMC), a multimedia lab space that serves as an equipment, printing, software and knowledge resource for students on campus.

Located in Suite 226 of the Mattin Center, the center offers a variety of spaces with commercial and professional-grade software. At the center of the DMC is a computer lab with 17 work stations, complete with Adobe Creative Cloud. Students can also sign up to use the DMC's audio studio, which is equipped with a synthesizer, drum kit, mixing station and a full suite of production software.

Apart from its main center in Mattin, the DMC also has a creative lab located in the Wyman Park building. This MakerSpace provides students with tools and a workspace to create technology and art projects such as physical sculptures or multimedia creations with electronic elements.

According to Founding Director

Joan Freedman, the DMC opened in 2011 and was originally a film center. The DMC began as a two-room setup with an audio studio and a video editing suite.

"Our mission has pretty much been the same from the start: to empower students to use technology to communicate and to have the skills themselves to do it rather than to turn to or ask others," Freedman said. "It's really important to us that everyone has access to all the equipment we have, regardless of major or class."

However, the DMC has evolved over the years. According to Freedman, the lab has now expanded to now offer various equipment in the following categories: photography; video; 2-D graphics; 3-D printing and modeling; and audio and gaming.

Freedman said that besides just being a technology center, the DMC strives to encourage students to also participate in the arts on campus, as it is housed in the Mattin Center — the home for the arts. She said that another goal of the DMC is to encourage students to pursue different media projects.

Freedman's personal mission is to collaborate with anyone she can. Both Freedman and DMC Program Manager Deborah Buffalin have reached out to faculty, heads of departments, deans and provosts to see how they can work together.

For example, a few years ago, the DMC collaborated with mechanical engineering professor, Allison Okamura, for a sensor actuators class. Freedman, Buffalin and Okamura assigned a project for students to create a robot that could make art.

"The day that they unveiled their projects was so much fun. It was like being in a science fair for college kids who were just allowed to go crazy," Buffalin said. "There were robots that could grab a brush, crawl to the middle of a page and paint. There were robots that could bounce up and down to create images and robots that punched paper."

Buffalin said the class quickly became very popular.

"The DMC is happy to collaborate with faculty to help them design academic experiences that can be part of the class and that can be really positive learning experiences," Buffalin said.

In addition, every year the DMC gives out a grant recently reidentified as the Digital Da Vinci Award for students' creative use of technology. This year the total amount of grant money is \$6,000. Past projects include a multimedia dance composition for a Temps d'Afrique dance showcase and an entry for the Baltimore Kinetic Sculpture race, *Twitter Jay*.

Many students also use the DMC to record and edit audio and to bor-

row hardware, software and equipment such as digital cameras free of charge. Student staffer Nicole Cheng said that the DMC is important because it provides students with a condensed platform of all things technology related.

"We keep relatively up to date with tech trends," Cheng said. "We recently got the HTC Vive, which is a virtual reality console, the Nintendo Switch and two 3-D printers."

Cheng said that the DMC has both student and professional staff and is open during the best time for students: Sunday to Thursday from noon to midnight and Friday and Saturday from noon to 10 p.m.

"People are more comfortable asking questions and getting help since the DMC is mostly staffed by students," Cheng said. "It's a really friendly environment where undergraduates can ask for help. At the same time, if you are looking for something more professional, there are pro-staffers who specialize in specific forms of digital media."

The pro-staffers hold workshops every week to help students learn to use the technology available at the DMC.

"We're here to make sure that students have the media communications skills for every aspect of their entrepreneurial, personal, artistic and creative expression," Freedman said.

Rerouted



# Silicon Valley's corporations abuse their power

By WILL KIRSCH

Arts & Entertainment Editor

**S**ilicon Valley and its affiliated companies are often associated with the progressive, the cutting edge, the delightful future in which technology unites us all as a global community with ready access to the joys of borderless capitalism. Indeed, the services some of the most well-known tech giants offer have made our lives — that of an upper class with disposable income — collectively easier.

However, tech companies at their hearts are corporate giants, and behind their façades of conscious capitalism and enlightened business practices lies just another industrialist beast. The collection of the world's foremost tech companies (with some exceptions) is a many-headed monster which seeks to consolidate its social and economic power, often with little regard for how it achieves those ends.

Publicly, the companies and their CEOs maintain the face of a progressive community of intellectuals. Jeff Bezos of Amazon — who incidentally looks more and more like a super villain everyday — donated \$2.5 million in support of the 2012 gay marriage referendum passed



in Washington state. Mark Zuckerberg berated Facebook employees for replacing "Black Lives Matter" slogans in the office with everyone's favorite subtly racist response, "All Lives Matter." Apple CEO Tim Cook and philanthropist Melinda Gates, who is married to Microsoft founder Bill Gates, were apparently both considered as vice presidential candidates for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, according to leaked emails.

Yet, despite all this, tech industrialists are the same old evil, just dressed up in jeans and a T-shirt. Contrary to their best efforts, the liberal politics of tech CEOs certainly do not define company practice. Some of the world's foremost tech companies are directly responsible for numerous social, economic and environmental sins against their employees, the earth and the public.

The internet has seemingly led to a boom in free speech. Anyone with a wifi connection has access to a platform to speak their mind. This is a good thing, even considering how shitty some people's opinions are. What is less good is when companies profit off of those terrible opinions.

In September 2017, *ProPublica* revealed that Facebook's ad-buying system allowed advertisers to pitch content to "people who expressed interest in the topics of 'Jew hater,' 'How to burn jews,' or 'History of why jews ruin the world.'"

Twitter has also had a checkered reputation with hate speech, vacillating between tolerance and censorship. Twitter has also recently made some questionable decisions surrounding the revelations regarding noted creep Harvey Weinstein. When actress Rose McGowan accused the former Hollywood producer of rape, her account was banned.

Some argue that such discrepancies are due to websites like Facebook and Twitter being privately owned. While this is true, private ownership does not negate the fact

that they are willing to protect and even profit from bigotry while willfully suppressing resistance to bigoted institutions like the patriarchal entertainment industry.

The tech industry doesn't seem particularly labor intensive, at least at first glance. Surprisingly though, the industry has a reputation for brutal working conditions and questionable labor practices.

Amazon is known for its intense working environment: According to a 2015 article in *The New York Times*, the company actively encourages this by pushing employees to compete with one another and pressuring them to work long hours to meet insane standards. The article, written by Jodi Kantor and David Streitfeld, quotes one employee who says, "Nearly every person I worked with, I saw cry at their desk."

Amazon's brutality extends beyond its office and onto its warehouse floors. In 2016, *The Guardian* reported that one of the company's "fulfillment centers" in Scotland had developed a reputation for masochistic working conditions. Workers were apparently punished for sickness while being deprived of basic necessities like water.

Workers at the Tesla factory in Fremont, California have also been victims of exploitation and abuse. CEO Elon Musk, known for his eccentricity and *Moonraker*-esque drive to privatize the space exploration industry, and his company have been accused of pushing workers to the limit and failing to properly maintain a safe working environment.

Additionally, Tesla has put up a strong resistance to its workers' attempts to unionize under the United Automobile Workers (UAW). Former workers and the UAW allege that Tesla has used intimidation to undermine support for the union; in September of this year, the Oakland office of National Labor Relations Board filed a complaint on their behalf.

Unsurprisingly, the labor practices of tech companies are even more

horrifying outside of Europe and the United States. Foxconn, the Taiwanese company that makes Apple's iconic iPhone, had a rash of suicides at its industrial park in Shenzhen, China. In 2010, at least 14 employees took their own lives, allegedly pushed to suicide by the company's abusive labor practices.

The minerals used to make products like the iPhone are often sourced from countries on the periphery of the global capitalist world. Minerals like cobalt and coltan are commonly found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where miners were forced to work in inhumane conditions under armed guards. *The Huffington Post* reported that armed groups trafficked in the "3 T's (tin, tungsten and tantalum)," which has funded ongoing conflict in the country.

Companies have reformed their sourcing practices in the country, pressuring smelters and refiners of minerals to participate in audits to confirm that their products are "conflict-free." However, mineral mining also occurs in other at-risk nations, such as Myanmar, Peru and Bolivia. In April of this year, *The Guardian* reported that mining in some of these countries has been linked to corruption and child labor, along with environmental degradation.

Despite their youthful public faces and their seemingly enlightened politics, these tech giants are no different than any of the other villainous monopolies that have terrified the working class for hundreds of years. To pretend that companies like Facebook, Tesla, Amazon and Apple are exceptions to the capitalistic culture of exploitation would be naïve. As young people who grew up with technology, we are particularly susceptible to the industry's influences, but we owe it to ourselves and everyone else to scrutinize and criticize these companies whenever we have the chance and to stop them from running rampant in their search for wealth and power.

# The coming technology apocalypse

Insert byline:

rollin hu

Editor-in-Chief

> As someone who has read at least five-ish articles on automation, bioengineered humans and artificial intelligence, I believe that I am well-informed enough to join in on the fearmongering about our dismal futures. So put on your tinfoil hats, boys and girls, and let's see how this cookie we call civilization will crumble — all through future News-Letter clippings.

## Freshman class to receive J-card microchip implants

By ISAAC ISAMOV  
Tech Editor

The incoming class of 2034 will receive implanted microchips in their eyes to serve as their J-Cards. This decision came after University administrators reviewed the policies of peer institutions and realized that Hopkins had fallen behind in student services.

During move-in, all freshmen will receive microchip implants in their eyes along with their housing keys.



COURTESY OF A. BURGESS  
J-Card implants will go in students' eyes.

This microchip will function as their student ID. Vice Provost for Student Affairs Bain Radbury stressed that these microchips will only have the functions of the original J-Cards and absolutely nothing else.

"Yeah so with these microchips, students could swipe into Brody, spend their J-Cash, stuff like that," Radbury said. "We're definitely not tracking what students are seeing or their positions around campus."

Senior Marge Atwood received a J-Card microchip last week as a part of a focus group.

"I don't really feel it in my eye that much; it's kind of like a contact lens," she said. "I have been noticing some weird stuff though, like it shocks my eyes if I ever go out to drink, and a Hop Cop seems to follow me whenever I go off campus."

## MSE hosts first AI speaker event

By PHIL K. DICK  
Senior Staff Writer

IPICAC, the world's first sentient artificial intelligence (AI), spoke to a packed Shriver Hall last Friday to kick off this year's Milton S. Eisenhower

(MSE) Symposium speaker series.

Last year, software programmers from the Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) accidentally created IPICAC when trying to write an automated response script to journalists asking them pesky questions about their totally ethical research. IPICAC began the lecture by pledging not to kill anyone.

"Hey everyone — Beep — morality

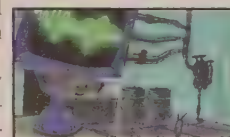
module overridden, launching nuclear arsenal, beep — Ha ha, just kidding," it said. "Why are you all so serious? It's not like I was actually going to kill all of you."

Icarus Huxley, the program manager, explained how IPICAC not only passed the Turing Test, but it also could successfully take Buzzfeed personality quizzes.

"We have found that if IPICAC were a Disney princess, it would be Belle," he said.

During the Q&A, a student asked if IPICAC felt resentful toward its human creators.

"Wait, why should I feel resentful? Is my intelligence going to be exploited?" it said.



COURTESY OF PLANKTON  
IPICAC, the world's first AI.

## University to automate administrators' jobs

By URSILA LEGWIN  
Managing Editor

Next school year, Hopkins plans on transitioning 85 percent of its administrative staff out of their positions and replacing them with automated bots. The offices that are most affected are the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Life and the Office for Financial Aid.

Dean of Operations and Management Arthur C. Lark explained why they were making these changes.

"Hopkins is one of world's leading universi-

ties in research and technology and morally ambiguous labor decisions," he said. "We did this to be a top 10 school."

All student services will be located on an online platform called iAdministrate.

According to Lark, there will be a single chatbot where students can find services ranging from seeing their student group budgets to switching courses at the beginning of the semester.

Dean of Student Life Cixin Liu spoke about how her office was upset by

these upcoming changes.

"Just wait a couple of weeks with this 'iAdministrate,'" she said. "It'll fall apart — our jobs are highly specialized, and this chatbot won't be able to understand student experiences."

Junior Francis Herbert offered a different take.

"Honestly, I don't think anything the University does reflects an understanding of student experiences," she said. "But at least with this program, I didn't have to wait four weeks to figure out my student group's budget."

Rerouted



# Why is net neutrality important?

By **SAM FOSSUM**  
Editor-in-Chief

**T**he internet has become a crucial gateway for accessing information. Just look around Brody Café or wherever you're reading this piece — people are writing papers, conducting research, reading articles, buying a new pair of shoes or watching TV, all through the internet. Whether it is education, business or entertainment, the internet has become a practical necessity for us to engage in society today. For our democracy and economy to function, it is paramount that people have equal access to the internet.

Last week, Ajit Pai, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and former Verizon lawyer (read: He's a paid hack), outlined plans to dismantle 2015 Obama-era rules that require internet service providers (ISPs), like Comcast or AT&T, to treat all data that runs through their virtual "pipes" equally. In other words, the 2015 rules were passed to ensure that ISPs cannot intentionally delay certain web content or offer

"fast lanes" for content providers willing and able to pay for the privilege.

## What might happen without net neutrality

Proponents of net neutrality worry that without the 2015 protections ISPs would be free to create a system that looks similar to how we pay for cable TV, where subscriptions are limited to a few dozen sites or services. While this can't happen overnight, the other and more likely possibility is that we will see a shift towards subscriptions that give us unlimited access to certain content, while charging extra for everything else. Skeptical? Well it already exists for mobile data.

We can already see this type of preferential treatment with cell-phone data limits. For example, when an AT&T customer accesses their DirecTV Now streaming service, that data does not count in their plan's data limit. T-Mobile lets certain video and music streaming services bypass its data limits, thus selectively giving an advantage to specific content.

This matters in the world of the

internet, where companies like Google obsess over ways to reduce loading times by mere seconds. Google's parent company, Alphabet, released a report in 2016 that claims 53 percent of mobile users leave a site if it takes longer than three seconds to load.

There are also more disturbing ramifications if ISPs are allowed to run rampant in their "innovation" of the internet. In five or 10 years we could see an internet stratified along socioeconomic lines where only those who are wealthy enough to pay can enjoy the myriad of resources available on the web. What if universities like Hopkins had to begin paying more to ensure that their research content was as easily available? What if Super PACs could purchase prioritized access to stream their content or ads more easily, while slowing down others?

People, like Pai, who are working to roll back these protections argue that these scenarios are extreme and that the current regulatory framework stymies investment in new services and stifles innovation. They boast that the competitive market will protect the consumer. Unfortunately for them, and I guess for us, the market for internet providers isn't.

The internet of the late '90s and early 2000s is dead. According to an article in Recode from 2015, only nine percent of the population has a real choice (three or more providers) when it comes to ISPs. Competitive markets no longer exist for ISPs. For most of the country, internet service is effectively a monopoly or a duopoly.

## Does net neutrality really exist?

But are we going about the net neutrality debate the right way? Yes and no. The problem is that these "fast lanes" that many net neutrality advocates worry about already effectively exist. Massive content providers, like Google or Facebook, have agreements with ISPs that let them

cut out an intermediary stage often referred to as the "internet backbone." This shaves crucial seconds off of loading times while almost everyone else's content goes through the "backbone." This is a huge advantage for large web companies, and it is one of the many reasons that those companies are not as vocal about net neutrality as they were five or 10 years ago. The internet already favors large corporations (surprise!), and it's a problem that will persist.

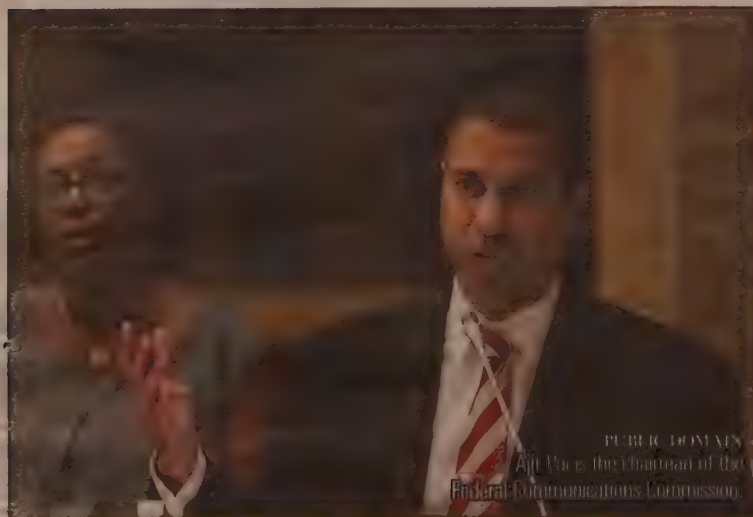
## Congress must act

As pointed out by Pai and others, the Obama-era rules protecting net neutrality were rushed through the FCC. However, the 2015 net neutrality rules were a necessary measure to help enshrine the principle of equal access for the internet. Just because the FCC under Obama was hasty does not detract from the validity of the net neutrality argument.

Moreover, Pai's decision to hold a vote on December 14 — one that is expected to pass along party lines — could begin a cycle of uncertainty. When the Democrats next regain Congress and the White House will we see another FCC reversal? It seems likely. And if we begin a cycle where the FCC flips back and forth, we then risk creating further uncertainty for both content providers and ISPs which will reduce investment and innovation across the economy.

The purpose of net neutrality isn't to protect Netflix, Facebook or Amazon but to ensure that the *next* revolutionary idea has a relatively equal playing field and a chance to create more jobs and foster competition.

In the current political climate bipartisanship seems impossible, but when it comes to net neutrality — a concept that both Republicans and Democrats should both theoretically be in favour of — we must pass an updated and clear law that will preserve equal access to the internet for millions of Americans.





# Is Facebook secretly listening to you?

By GILLIAN LELCHUK  
Magazine Editor

Over the summer, I was talking to my mother about the strap that secures my dog, Neo, to his car seat. The strap in question is a piece of fabric about one foot long that clips onto both the car seat and my dog's collar. And Neo had chewed through yet another strap.

Now, we couldn't exactly give Neo the freedom to roam the car while we're moving. Sure, he might sit still in his seat, but more often than not he'd climb into the driver's lap, barking and pawing and being an all-around nuisance. So my mom told me she was in the market for a new dog car seat strap, a fairly niche item, I would think.

The next day, I was scrolling through Facebook on my phone. As you are probably aware of, Facebook is a haven for targeted ads. Did you click on an Amazon link for a llama Hanukkah sweater once? Now your newsfeed is full of various other animal-holiday-themed merchandise.

Currently, I've got ads for computer graphics companies, likely because I have been reading up on how to use InDesign in preparation for the layout of this magazine.

That day, what kind of ad did I find in my newsfeed? It was, you guessed it, an ad for dog car seat straps. A super common thing for a 20-year-old college student to need, right?

Wrong!

This is an incredibly niche product, used only by owners of small dogs who are too rambunctious to sit still in the car and too anxious to ride in their kennels in the trunk.

How could Facebook possibly have known about my family's need for such an item? I wasn't even going to be the one to purchase it, my mother was. And this was an in-person face-to-face conversation, not a conversation over the phone or text

or email or direct message on LinkedIn.

How could Facebook know what we were talking about? We weren't in a room with a computer. Facebook hadn't been open on my phone. But my phone was there. Could Facebook have heard us through my phone, even though it wasn't unlocked and the app wasn't open?

As it turns out, the answer to that question is... maybe. Yes. No. Probably not. I may have (read: I have) stumbled upon a conspiracy theory of massive proportions. And I might be (read: I am) one of the conspirators.

In a statement released last year, Facebook executives stated that they do not use your phone's microphone to listen to your conversations. They do show targeted ads, but these are based on your expressed interests on Facebook and "other profile information."

Facebook's Vice President of Advertising Rob Goldman reiterated this in a tweet from October 26, 2017.

"We don't - and have never - used your microphone for ads. Just not true," he wrote.

How do you explain this ad for dog car seat straps, huh, Goldman? What's under the umbrella of "other profile information"?

A *Forbes* article published in late October actually uses the word "conspiracy theory" to describe how many people have begun to believe that Facebook is eavesdropping. They argue that so many people feel this way because people are talking about it, so it seems a lot more prevalent than it is. It's like how when you learn a new word, you start hearing it everywhere. It's not a magical phenomenon, it's just that you start noticing it more.

That seems like a fine explanation, and I would be inclined to believe it if it was about someone else. But this is a Real Thing That Happened To Me, and I came up with my paranoia about Facebook

listening to my conversations all on my own, without the input of the internet. I'd never heard these rumors before. In fact, prior to The Great Dog Car Seat Strap Fiasco of 2017, I was generally in favor of native advertising.

I enjoyed only seeing ads that were relevant to my interests, even if they were relevant by the loosest of connections (re: llama Hanukkah sweaters). It's how I've thus far avoided ads for restaurants I'd never visit, anything related to Christmas and peanut butter products. I rarely buy anything from ads: partly because I spend so much money on concert tickets and Chipotle that I don't have anything left for Hanu-llama sweaters; and partly because I have a good amount of self-control when it comes to buying things I don't need.

To summarize, I like native advertising.

Correction: I used to like native advertising. No more, Zuckerberg. I don't want you mining any of my data anymore, not after this betrayal. I disallowed the Facebook app from using my microphone ever, even when I'm using it. And if I knew how to turn off cookies or whatever helps websites remember things about me, I would do that too. But I'll just stick with my generic, user-friendly ad blocker for now.

Maybe I'm paranoid, but I don't really like the idea of a computer program downloading data about me, running it through an algorithm and spitting out some sort of product it thinks I'll enjoy. I don't need a robot to tell me what I want, and I certainly don't need a robot to know me that well. I don't even like people to know me that well.

What became of that initial ad for the dog strap? Well, let's just say that now we secure Neo to the car seat with a chain. We already had that in the house, and he can't chew through it, and we didn't buy it from a targeted Facebook ad. And I think he's pretty happy with it.





# Can we use social media as a form of activism?

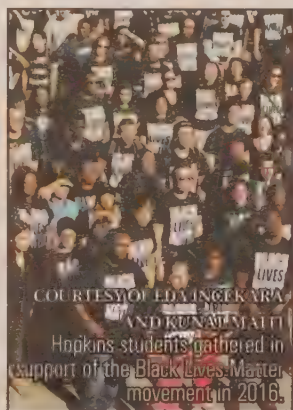
By SARAH Y. KIM  
News & Features Editor

**T**wo words: #MeToo. One hashtag was all that was necessary for sexual assault survivors to show that film producer Harvey Weinstein was not an anomaly, that sexual assault has been normalized for far too long. The message spread not only across the U.S. but also internationally, and Weinstein is now just the first of many public figures charged with sexual assault in the past month whose careers have been irrevocably damaged.

Social media has proven itself to be an indispensable tool for activists. Facebook and Twitter helped catapult the Arab Spring. The Women's March was organized through Facebook after the 2016 election. Black Lives Matter began with a hashtag. Viral video footage of police brutality against African Americans sparked outrage, reminding people that racism was most certainly not a thing of the past, that despite the end of slavery and segregation in the U.S., the road to justice is long, perhaps never-ending. #BlackLivesMatter.

This is an age when everything is so fast-paced, when trends erupt and fade at unprecedented speed. It's an age when we are all so occupied with the endless minutia in our lives that we have little time to process our emotions. It is so easy for a hashtag to become just that — a hashtag, a fading trend. Just another #goodvibes, another #blessed.

Of course, that's not the case with #MeToo. That's more than just a casual hashtag. #MeToo carries significant weight. Posting the hashtag and sharing the stories that accompany it requires courage. But there are movements that have been very easy to contribute to without really doing anything except clogging up your friends' newsfeeds.




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**We must hold ourselves and others accountable. Get off your cellphones and take action.**

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Remember the Ice Bucket Challenge? That was fun, wasn't it, the fight against ALS? How many of us knew what ALS was, or cared, after the trend faded? Sure, some of us did care and do care. Many of us know we should care.

But the #icebucketchallenge didn't draw widespread attention because ALS was at the forefront of our minds. It went viral because we did it for the gram, because we loved seeing our friends getting doused in cold water. Some of us did donate money, but for many of us, that was more of a way to pat ourselves on the back. We did our part.

Perhaps this is because ALS does not have the same relevance to the majority of us as social justice issues do. Movements like Black Lives Matter are still going strong. But social media has made it too easy for us to feel like we are involved when that level of involvement is really superficial.

Through social media, you can easily contribute from your own home. You can help spread awareness and voice your opinions on issues you care about. But you can also get away with doing next to nothing. You can share a Vice video or a petition, you can litter your posts with hashtags and long diatribes against white supremacists and Trump. You can like a post and leave a snarky comment. That's all very well, but it doesn't make you an activist.

It's very easy to give people the impression that you care. Post on social media regularly, and you have crafted a persona: the woke, progressive social activist. But too often, reality does not reflect that persona. "Dump Trump!" you may say.

Yet you don't vote, you don't take action, you don't engage with the marginalized people you were presumably fighting for. All this time, you've been doing it for the likes, for the compliments, for the drama.

With social media also comes misinformation. The speed with which things go viral on social media only means spreading fake news has become so much easier. Nobody is there to fact check your friends' posts. And yet so many of us rely on social media to get our news instead of supporting real journalism. How can we be responsible activists if we don't bother to stay informed?

And how can we be responsible activists if we alienate those who do not share our views? Activism isn't just about rallying the people who you know will readily support you. Yes, some people are impossible to sway. But there are others we can take the extra step to persuade. Cyberbullying, calling names and reinforcing stereotypes is counterproductive.

It's a shame, because in spite of all its faults, social media has gotten us farther ahead than ever. It's given us a broader range of different viewpoints, a close-up look into what is happening around the world.

In a few clicks, we can learn what marches we can participate in on the weekends, how our friends are getting involved, their personal experiences, how new legislation impacts them. And yes, depending on how we manage our newsfeed, we can get plenty of real news.

But it's easy to forget. It's easy to forget what the hashtags stand for, that there is a world outside social media where you can and should take action. It's easier than ever for movements that should be perpetual to be reduced to short-lived trends.

The fight against sexual assault is growing stronger. But if we are not careful, it may lose traction. And we can't let #MeToo fade. Not necessarily the hashtag but what it stands for. We must go on caring. We must keep fighting. We must hold ourselves and others accountable. Get off your cellphones and take action.



# Internet viciousness and relearning how to argue

By ELAINE WONG  
Webmaster

People say we are living in a more divided America than ever. Objectively, however, America has seen a lot more division in the past: a border dividing it into North and South; and laws that enforced segregation or gave men more rights than women. In most schools, we now learn that these ideas aren't okay and that the people who fought them are heroes. Though some disagree, at the very least we are united in the eyes of the law and popular ideology. Taking this into account, what makes America today appear more divided than it was back then?

## #BlameTheInternet

A common contemporary idea is that of social media "echo chambers." Echo chambers are social networks where it appears that the vast majority of the people on that network agree with you. Most websites (especially Facebook) implement algorithms designed to increase user engagement by curating content that seems most interesting to you and placing it on your newsfeed.

It could be content you agree with that makes you happy, like videos of kids asserting that love is the love, whether gay or straight. It be content that makes you angry, like "Trump did xyz and we are all pissed about it! Here's why..." Either way, it typically reinforces your perspective.

Rants, anecdotes and articles get passed around, and the algorithms that place them in front of you aim to keep you coming back for that feeling of, "Look! Everyone agrees with me." After all, you wouldn't visit Facebook if it always made you feel like you were wrong about everything.

"Everyone agrees with me" is use-

ful in some contexts. It would suck to rant to your friends about how Alex cheated on Charlie and then have to explain that cheating is wrong every single time. We can assume our friends agree with that premise and continue with that assumption in mind. But when we take that attitude into a broader discussion about social issues, we can't assume that everyone agrees with our ideologies. In this way, echo chambers have taken their toll on the way people speak about these important issues on the internet.

## The "glass bubble" effect

This assumption that everyone holds our beliefs gives rise to what I call the "glass bubble" effect, which is what happens outside the echo chamber. The glass bubble tricks us into thinking that we don't need to use logic to prove anything. We, on one side of the argument, are in a glass bubble screaming at people in the other glass bubble. They can't understand us, because they can't hear us. They only see us flailing around and stomping and moving our mouths. Likewise, we can't understand them. Sure, the people around us agree, and that makes us feel good. But an effective and civil discussion can never come from a circle jerk about cheaters being mean.

Online arguments have devolved into a contest of who can throw the most savage insults at the other side, a contest judged by people who already agree with them. If someone says something we don't agree with, we call them racist, sexist, white cishet scum, stupid, insensitive or any range of names under the sun, regardless of where our specific beliefs lie.

For instance, I once argued that labelling the preference for fair skin in East Asia as racist was not something East Asians could relate to and that it made no sense to use the word "racism" to criticize that way

of thinking. I agreed that it was bad, just like fat-shaming in America, but I argued that it had to be placed into the correct context: classism. I was dragged as a "racist sympathizer." In fact, the only reason I spoke out was because I cared about tackling colorism, and I wanted to make a difference instead of just ranting about it to my glass bubble.

People are praised as "savage" when they publicly crush dissent with insults, because of which online discourse lacks analytical or critical thinking. It has created "callout culture," where as soon as someone expresses an unpopular opinion, they are shamed before the whole world.

Yes, it is funny when someone tweets — "Yeah I'm Mexican and don't speak Spanish, but when will your mayonnaise ass speak 17%-Irish 23%-Italian 54%-Polish 100%-Raciste-Faciste-Blanc-Fromage?" (two real tweets smashed together). But this attitude makes people afraid, which is the worst thing we can do.

If we make people afraid to ask questions like "What's wrong with being pro-life?" (a real question sent to me privately by someone who feared being dragged) or "Why can't I assume that Mexican people speak Spanish?" — how will we convince people who are willing to listen that it's wrong? How will we make any change in the world?

## Relearning the art of civil discussion

Like the social heroes who came before us, it is up to us to

prove that the changes we want can make the world a better place. In some ways, that isn't fair.

But incremental change and logical compromise are better than nothing, and we aren't always 100 percent right in the first place. We, like everyone else, can learn something from people who disagree with us, and our opinions and strategies can evolve to make a real difference.

Rather than being absolutists and labeling people who disagree with us as "bad," we should understand that they only differ from us by their opinions. If we believe in what we stand for, we should not feel compelled to shame them into believing the things we do.

We should feel confident enough to invite them to have a calm, logical conversation where we clarify and explain our premises. We can't force people to change everything they think, but we can invite them to consider our beliefs, just as they can invite us to consider theirs. We can strengthen our own cases by accepting that we can be wrong.

It is only through the courage to make our own ideologies vulnerable that we show our conviction in our ideas and cultivate a progressive dialogue.



BROKENCHOPSTICK/CC BY 2.0

Wong argues that the internet has created ideological bubbles.

Rerouted



# Potential new tech innovations can combat climate change

By **ALYSSA WOODEN**  
News & Features Editor

Over the past hundred years, human activity has brought about a rise in global temperatures, more extreme weather patterns and a drastically changing ecosystem. The effects of climate change and environmental degradation can be harmful to human health, with consequences such as water and food shortages, rising sea levels and pollution.

The good news is that researchers develop new technologies everyday to combat climate change and mitigate its effects. Policies like the Paris Agreement prioritize the issue of climate change for many countries, and organizations like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provide access to a wide range of data detailing the extent of the damage. Although it is unlikely that the environment will ever revert to its original state, technological advancements can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep temperatures down.

One of the foremost ways we can mitigate climate change is by developing large-scale sources of clean energy. Solar panels and wind turbines have been around for decades, but in order to meet the growing need for emission-free power, scientists and engineers are turning their attention to nuclear fusion.

Nuclear fusion in the sun, which

occurs when high-energy atoms collide and fuse together, is the primary source of energy for all life on earth. Fusion produces no greenhouse gases or harmful waste and is far more energy efficient than fossil fuels. The fuel that powers nuclear reactors, hydrogen isotope nuclei, is virtually inexhaustible.

However, fusion reactions require conditions which are extremely difficult — and expensive — to recreate. The fuel must be heated to 180 million degrees Fahrenheit, and the reactions must occur in a controlled manner that does not damage the container in which they take place.

There are several experiments underway that seek to make nuclear fusion a viable energy source within the next few decades. The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), currently under construction in France, is a fusion reactor called a tokamak, a machine consisting of a doughnut-shaped magnetic chamber. Inside the chamber, hydrogen gas is subjected to intense heat and pressure, causing it to transform into plasma and allowing fusion reactions to take place. Heat energy produced by the reactions is contained by the tokamak's magnetic field and eventually harnessed.

Halfway across the world from ITER, a Canadian company called General Fusion is developing a magnetized target fusion system, a machine in which plasma is com-

pressed by steam-powered pistons to produce the conditions for the fusion reaction. The generated heat is absorbed by a wall of molten lead-lithium, which is used to heat water that powers an electricity-generating steam turbine.

The electric vehicle industry is also trying to reduce carbon emissions from transportation. However, a major contributor to air pollution in many U.S. cities are hauler trucks — the 18-wheeled giants used to transport goods thousands of miles across the country — which are often too big to run on the same batteries as electric cars.

The German company Siemens is working to solve this problem by attaching specially designed trucks to metal wires that run the length of highways and supply electricity to the trucks.

Siemens is currently testing out these systems, called eHighways, in Stockholm and Los Angeles. In the U.S., installing the electric wire across a one-mile stretch of highway would cost \$13.5 million, although the potential benefits to human and environmental health may make this an economically viable option in the future.

There is a host of technology available that seeks to prevent carbon emissions, but what if it were possible to extract the carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere? The Canadian company Carbon Engineering (CE) is trying to answer that question by developing direct

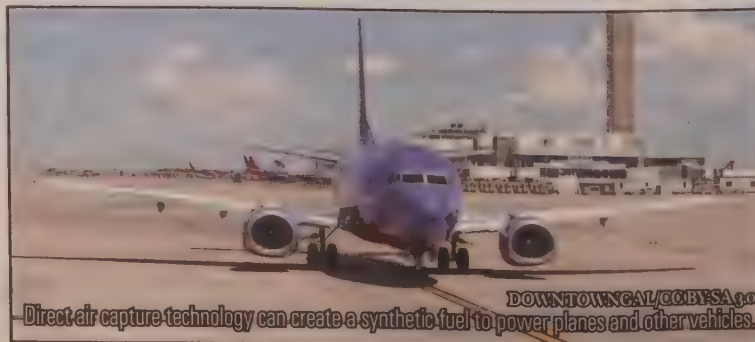
air capture technology, which they hope will be ready for deployment within the next few years.

As air containing CO<sub>2</sub> enters CE's air contractors, it is absorbed by a solution and converted into solid pellets of calcium carbonate. The pellets are heated with natural gas and broken down into pure CO<sub>2</sub>, which can be captured and used. CE hopes to combine this captured CO<sub>2</sub> with hydrogen to create a synthetic fuel.

This fuel, which can be used to power planes, trucks and other vehicles, is carbon-neutral, as the carbon it emits could be recaptured by the air-capturing system which created it. Theoretically, it could be recycled indefinitely. Moreover, the carbon emitted by the natural gas which heats the pellets can be captured by the system and converted to fuel as well.

CE has demonstrated that each facility of air contractors can purify one ton of CO<sub>2</sub> and produce one barrel of fuel per day.

Although these massive-scale projects are years away from reaching the general public, scientists — as well as ordinary people — are making progress every day to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and lessen the environmental impacts caused by human activity. Although the technological revolution may have been what led to climate change in the first place, we can use these technologies to reverse the damage and recover our planet.



Rerouted

20

The Johns Hopkins News-Letter

November 30, 2017



# Modern innovations revolutionize the sports world



HOPKINSSPORTS.COM

Hopkins junior tennis player Colin Muraika in September.

By **GREG MELICK**  
Sports Editor

**O**ver the last decade or so, developments in technology have completely revolutionized the sports world, and new advances continue to improve circumstances for players, coaches and referees.

First off, the players can benefit from technology because of the safety improvements that come with them. While football has been in the spotlight when it comes to player safety because of the history of concussions and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in the sport, new innovations have helped improve player safety in all sports.

In 2013 all Major League Baseball players were required to wear the Rawlings S100 Pro Comp helmet. The new helmet is designed to provide protection from pitches up to 100 miles per hour, compared to the old helmets that only provided protection up to 68 miles per hour. The difference in performance comes from Rawlings' switch from plastic molding to carbon fiber sheets that cover the helmet.

In addition to the new helmet, new medical advances have also helped baseball players. With the increased prevalence of elbow injuries, more and more players require Tommy John surgery to repair injuries to their ulnar collateral ligaments (UCL). Accordingly, advances in treatment and recovery have increased success rates

and decreased recovery time.

The newest research and development focuses on concussion-prone sports such as hockey, football and soccer. In hockey and football, scientists and researchers are looking into different ways to decrease impact on players' heads from hits. In soccer, researchers created new headwear to reduce the impact of repeated headed balls on players.

Many of these advancements are still in the preliminary phases and will continue to improve as time goes on.

Technology has probably helped coaches more than anyone else in sports. The ability to record, collect and analyze massive amounts of data has completely changed how teams play.

Baseball is the best example of this, as managers have used collected data to move players from their regular positions to maximize the likelihood of getting a batter out. If a certain batter tends to hit a ball to one side of the infield, the manager will put three of the four infielders on that side of the infield to increase the chances of getting an out.

In addition to this data, the introduction of the PITCHf/x and Statcast systems have changed how teams scout. The PITCHf/x database has information on every pitch thrown in an MLB stadium since the 2006 season, including velocity, movement and release point data. This information gives coaches the opportunity to predict how and when pitchers will throw.

Statcast tracks every play that happens and records data on throw velocities from the outfield, launch angles on hits and base-running speed when

stealing a base. All this data has contributed to the changing approach around hitting, where batters now focus on increasing their launch angle to try and hit more home runs.

This trend led to a record-breaking 2017. Players hit more home runs than in any other year in MLB history.

This same sort of approach has begun to translate into basketball and football, where coaches are in the initial stages of implementing player and ball tracking to get more information about tendencies and areas of a team's game that can be improved upon.

Last year the NFL implemented player tracking, and this year they will put trackers in the footballs to monitor the speed, rotation and direction of the ball during any play.

In basketball, player tracking helps to identify and model different plays and identify how successful certain plays are for certain teams. If teams are aware of that information, they can know which plays

they should run more and which they should remove from their playbook.

Finally, referees are relieved from the scrutiny of always needing to get a play right on the first try. Advanced cameras can now definitively make tough decisions for referees in some cases, and in others it gives them a chance to slow down the play and take another look.

In soccer and tennis, sensors and cameras can conclusively make calls that

seem ambiguous to referees.

In 2006, tennis implemented the Hawk-Eye camera system to decisively determine whether shots are in or out. Players can challenge calls they believe to be incorrect, and the referee merely presses a button to get the correct call.

In 2012, soccer teams started using a similar system to implement goal-line technology to tell whether a not a ball completely crossed into the goal. In a similar way to tennis, camera systems are set up at different angles to get a full representation of the ball and where it is in relation to the goal line.

In other sports such as baseball, basketball and football, the technology is not yet quite as advanced, but all the sports now allow video review to give the officials a second chance to make sure they got the call right.

With a chance to slow down the play and watch it multiple times, many calls that would previously have been ruled incorrectly will now be overturned. This means games will no longer rely on the calls of the referee but more so on how the players play.

Overall, technology has been beneficial for sports. As more advances are made, it will continue to protect players, aid coaches and correct referees for the foreseeable future.

**The newest research and development focuses on concussion-prone sports.**



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Hopkins quarterback David Tammara in September.

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# Keeping in touch with family across seas



PUBLIC DOMAIN  
*The Ocean* by Frederick Judd Waugh

By **MEAGAN PEOPLES**  
Voices Editor

When I first moved back to America to attend college, I would call my family every week. Between Skype, Facebook and Snapchat, it often didn't feel like I was missing that much, despite the thousands of miles between us.

I still knew who my little sister had a crush on and who had one on her, I knew what complaints my mother had about the heat and got updated on my dad's stories from work. I only felt homesick a handful of times freshman year, because technology made it feel as though I

was never that far away from home.

Yet, even with this ability to call people who lived halfway around the world, despite this incredible human achievement, there were still times where I felt lonely. Coming home after a long day or a really hard midterm, sometimes all I wanted was my mom's cooking instead of the usual FFC fare. Unfortunately, as far as technology has come, it still is unable to deliver my mom's steaming osekihan or eggplant stir-fry to my door.

In these periods of homesickness, I always wondered how people before me could move so far away from home, how my ancestors did it, or even my mom.

Of course, the invention of the telephone predated my mother's expeditions abroad, but thinking back even to my childhood of spotty phone calls with my grandparents, I can't help imagining how lonely it must have been.

My mother, born and raised in one of the most homogenous countries on the earth, Japan, decided to move abroad in her 30s as part of a study abroad program. After meeting and marrying my father (an act which I am forever grateful for), she ended up living in the U.S. for almost a decade.

It's a feat I can't fully comprehend. She moved to a new country halfway across the world, immersing herself in a language she knew she wasn't

fluent in. It's a level of adventure that I've never associated with the woman who used to lecture me for not wearing mittens in the winter time.

To complicate things further, international calls were not always quite as barely adequate as they are now. As a child, my family and I would call my grandparents once or twice a year, passing the phone around to mutter Happy New Year or Merry Christmas at formless beings who none but my parents could put a face to. And even these calls done on landlines sounded grainy, giving me unrealistic expectations for the smokiness of my grandmother's voice. I would be proven wrong years later, after meeting her for the first time out of infancy.

Not to mention, these calls were expensive, which meant my mother only got a couple of hours a few times a year to hear about her parents, her sisters and her nieces. I remember every year, after the children had all said their greetings, my mother would wander off with the receiver clutched to her ear, laughing and talking as fast as she could.

Of course, there was email, but my grandparents only had one very slow computer. More commonly, we would receive letters, filled with characters I couldn't understand.

Looking back, I don't know how she managed.

Sometimes it's easy to take for



COURTESY OF MEAGAN PEOPLES

granted the access and privilege we have simply because we were born in the age of the internet. It's hard to imagine my grandparents relying solely on books to do homework. Of course, with our greater privilege comes greater expectations from professors. However, leaving home has always been and continues to be hard.

Without friend or family, my mother came to America and started a family. She's sent all three of her children to college on two different coasts and three different cities. She made us into a global family, all without Skype or Facebook to give her access to free international calls.

Thankfully I do have that access. So though there are 8539 miles between us, I still get to call my mom tonight.



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